CONTENT IN A GARDEN

BY CANDACE WHEELER

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BY CANDACE WHEELER
WITH DECORATIONS BY
DORA WHEELER KEITH

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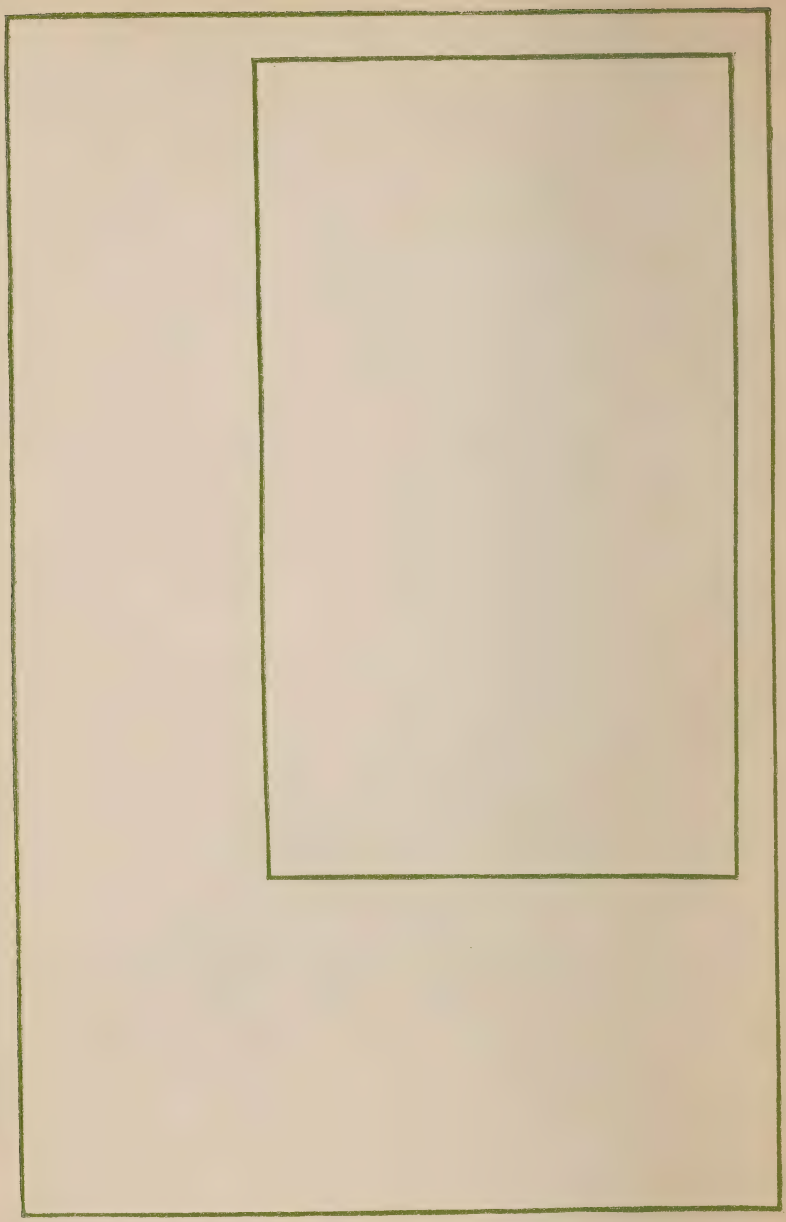


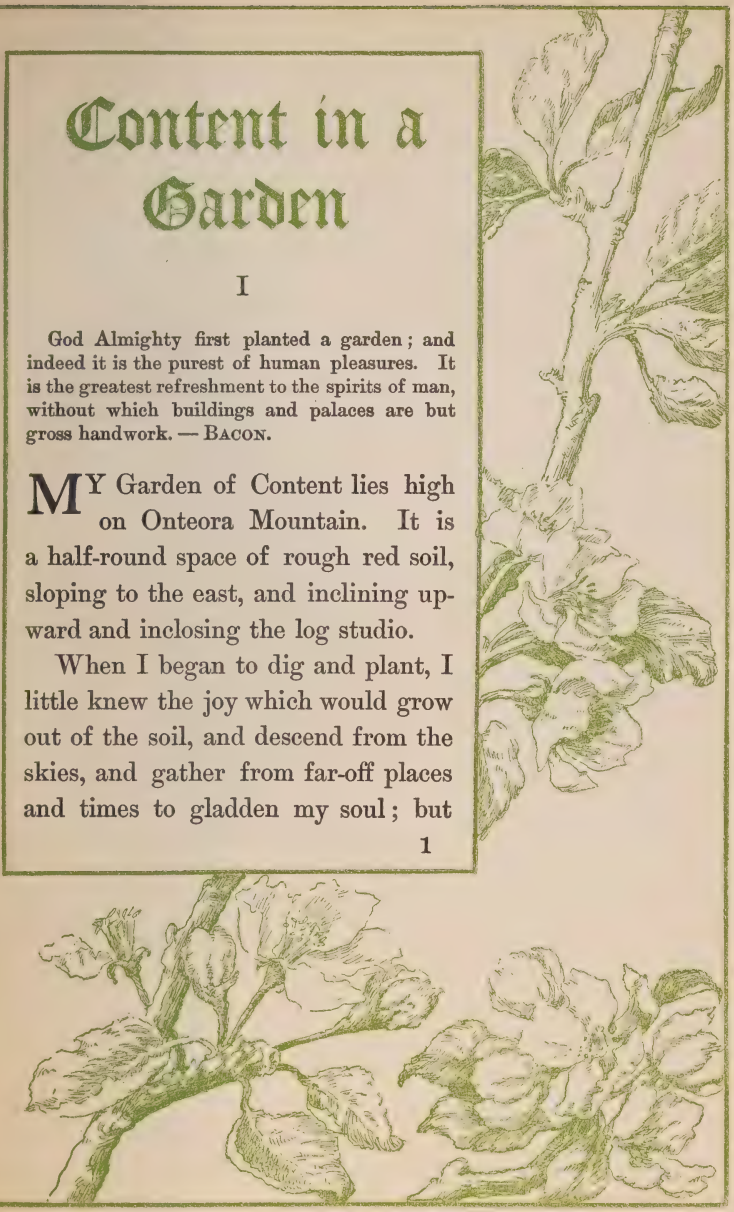
Content in a Garden

I

God Almighty first planted a garden; and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handwork. — BACON.

MY Garden of Content lies high on Onteora Mountain. It is a half-round space of rough red soil, sloping to the east, and inclining upward and inclosing the log studio.

When I began to dig and plant, I little knew the joy which would grow out of the soil, and descend from the skies, and gather from far-off places and times to gladden my soul; but



to-day, as I walk therein, or sit in the spicy shadow of its pair of fir trees, and think what it has done for me, I feel that untroubled happiness begins and ends within it; that it is truly the Land of Content.

It was just a rocky patch of pasture land lying between us and the woods, when it came into my mind to plant it as a garden, and how could I guess that the ground of it had been longing to blossom? but when I saw how it received and fostered and urged into growth the things I planted, I understood that the earth mother had coveted the power of making herself beautiful.

Before the garden was made, there were two young balsam-fir trees growing almost under the house eaves, —

young things pulled from the roadside in one of our drives. It was easy to see that they approved of the garden, for summer by summer they threw up yard-long blue-green spires, until now, as I stand on the upper piazza, I can hold a cup and gather their drops of balsam.

How fine they are! Just at the college graduate age, and full to overflow of the joy of living.

There is something in a balsam-fir which seems to gather to itself almost more than its arborescent share of human interest. The young trees are delightful babies; one can hardly walk away and leave them alone. Just as innocent and enticing as a human baby, and appealing to sense as well as sentiment, for they exhale the

sweetness of a freshly-bathed one-year-old.

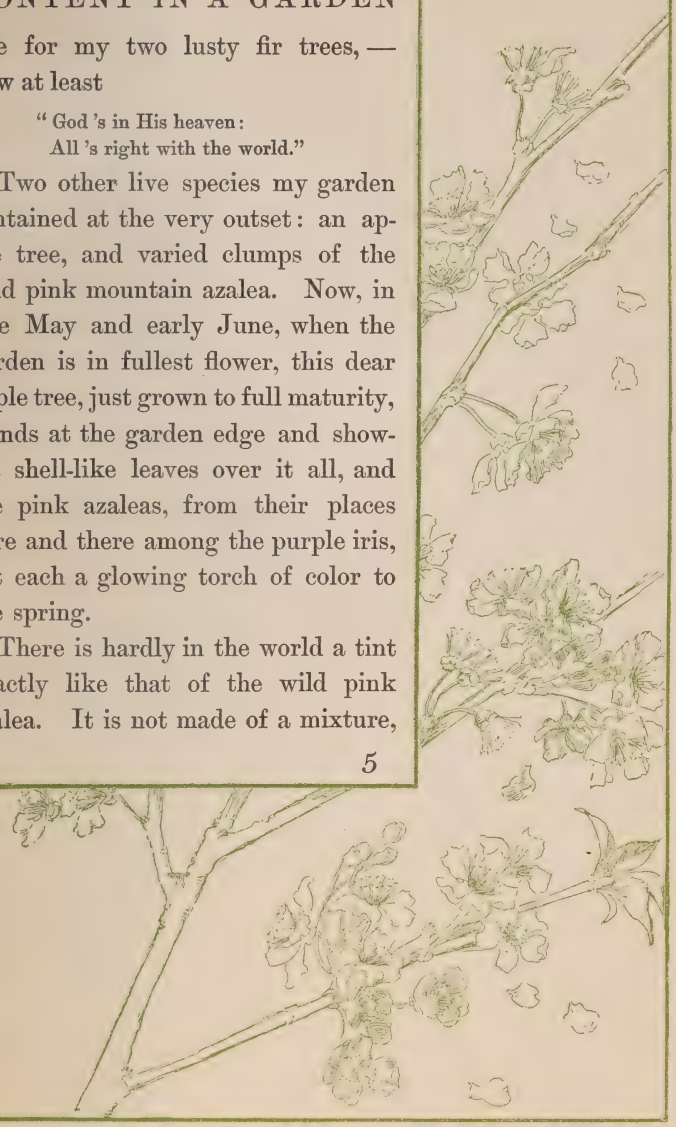
Their behavior is ideal! Would that human childhood might stay in its own place, and do so exactly what one could wish, as do the young balsams! Their youth and middle age are almost equally satisfactory, but when they come to *old* age, sorrow for the first time enters their lives, and strikes them with a too early decrepitude. Indeed, the age of a fir tree is wholly wanting in the royal beauty and dignity of an aged oak, or even a venerable beech tree. The blood of youth sinks away into the soil, the sinews dry into powder, and leave the brittle limbs no strength to battle with the storms. But I refuse to look forward to old

age for my two lusty fir trees, — now at least

> "God 's in His heaven:
> All 's right with the world."

Two other live species my garden contained at the very outset: an apple tree, and varied clumps of the wild pink mountain azalea. Now, in late May and early June, when the garden is in fullest flower, this dear apple tree, just grown to full maturity, stands at the garden edge and showers shell-like leaves over it all, and the pink azaleas, from their places here and there among the purple iris, lift each a glowing torch of color to the spring.

There is hardly in the world a tint exactly like that of the wild pink azalea. It is not made of a mixture,



as are other pink flowers, where you can trace vermilion and crimson and scarlet pulsing through the grains and veins of white. It is all pink, deepening into crimson in the curving stamens, contrasting perfectly with the young green of its folded leaves, and smelling of the very essence of spring, of roots and mosses and wintergreen and partridge berry, and all that makes spring intoxicating to sense and spirit.

When I began to plant, I found I must build some kind of discouraging barrier between my precious half acre and grazing horses and straying dogs. Not a fence; for a fence would be incongruous in the face of the near woods and far mountains and the heavenly slope which begins at the

garden, and, flowing off for fenceless miles, at last reaches the Kaaterskill Clove, and is lapped into the blue distance of the Hudson Valley. So it happens, that because we do not mean to cut ourselves off from careless nature by careful civilization, the garden ground is rimmed with a lengthened stone-heap which does not separate it too positively from the rocky slope of which it was originally a part. In truth, it is not a wall, but a rolling up and circling around of boulders left in the track of a former glacier.

When one looks at the landscape, it is not hard to imagine a great ice sea streaming through the deep mountain hollows, and creeping, creeping, creeping over the slopes toward its

final dissolution, grinding all the rocks into fragments of broken uniformity! After the glacier came the forests of beautiful evergreen giants, but that race also has followed the glaciers into eternal vacancy. Standing among my flowers, the æons of time are all within the compass of a thought. Glacial days, when the world was shaped with an ice axe; forest days, which sheltered unimaginable prehistoric beasts; later days of primitive man; and after them all the days of to-day, when my garden smiles and smells. My own little day, so full of love and joy and sorrow and contentment!

When I inclosed my garden, I meant that the wall should be broad enough to grow weeds and grasses

and blossoming stone-crop on its top, for nothing has ever seemed to me more beautiful than the springing of grasses and flowering weeds on gray stone walls. Any one who has seen wild oats poising their wave-green heads against the blue of an English sky, growing between buttercups and crimson sorrel along the sills of high-up empty windows of English cathedrals, or has watched the transparent glaze of scarlet poppies trembling along the brink of Roman ruins, must long to see again the grace and beauty of green growths on old gray stone.

It is an effect we do not often get in our dear new country, where the very stones — except when one finds them in deep old forests — seem ab-

solutely new; as if they were created yesterday. And yet they are old, as old as the world; it is only we and our work that are new. Yet I did not see why, by a judicious filling in of chinks and hollows with turf, I might not patch the new effort upon the old, old stone, and so compass my heart's desire of a growing wall.

It does grow, in a measure. Not quite as I willed it; but whoever has not learned to let Nature have her way is not fit for a gardener, or, for that matter, for a contented soul. So the stones of my wall are not entirely covered, although outside it grows the wild white clematis, and inside, the sweet striped-honeysuckle. Twice in the summer it is an irregular mound of blossom and sweetness.

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I have so planted my garden that the flowers come in procession, each month or period with its own special glory. To make this summer procession a perfect one, I have taken care that while one kind of flower is passing, it shall occupy all the garden with an unbroken sheet of bloom. Thousands of flowers of one variety, lifting their faces to the sun in the morning or standing on dress parade through the afternoon, make an impression upon the eye and the imagination which is impossible to mixed masses, however beautiful their separate parts.

In a large and new garden it is not quite a simple matter to secure this breadth of effect, but with time and care and parsimonious hoarding

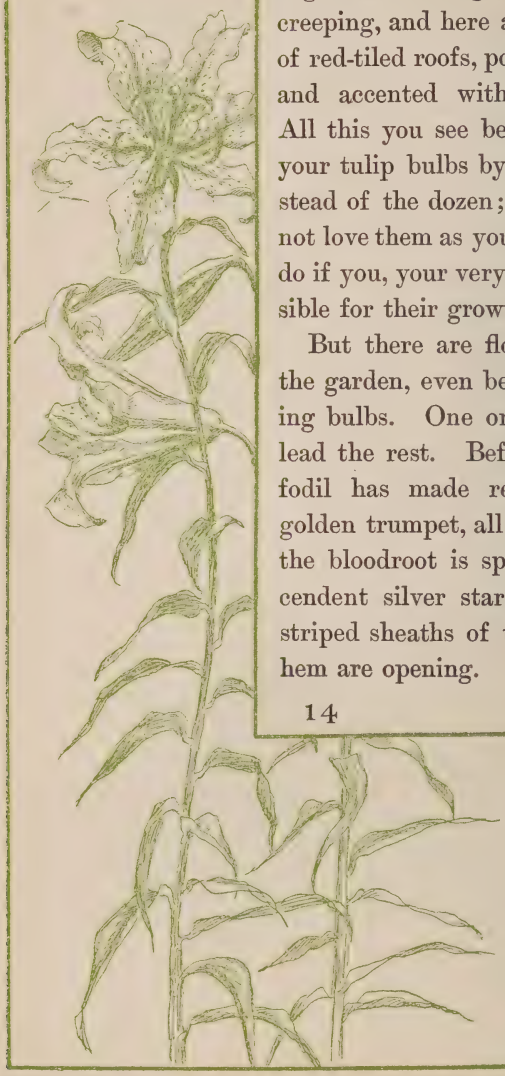
of every wandering rootlet, it is easily possible. When I acquire a new variety by purchase or gift, and there is not enough to plant broadcast, I put it in the nursery. This is an indiscriminate flower bed absolutely sacred to my own care, where I plant parted roots and seeds and cuttings of anything of which I am avaricious; and having planted, encourage them with kindness and tendance, until each has made a family after its kind. When any one variety has multiplied largely, I consider its color and time of flower, and decide what it will harmonize with or what it shall follow; and so, upon a settled plan of flower decoration, I plant it everywhere.

If, on the other hand, one must buy flowers for planting, — which to

a real gardener seems an unnatural proceeding, and to one of long experience an unnecessary one, — it is as easy to buy by the thousand as by the dozen, and a certain sentiment will attach itself to a thousand tulip bulbs, which you know were grown on the mud flats of Holland, tended by slow and heavy men in blue blouses; and after they were grown and harvested, ferried along low-lying canals to some sea city, there to be gathered into innumerable thousands and shipped to America. As you scatter the thousands over your garden ground, each into its own little pit in its own little place, you can see in your mind the flattened fields of their nativity, covered with millions of blossoming tulips, and the grass-

edged canals along which slow boats are creeping, and here and there a group of red-tiled roofs, pointed and ruffled, and accented with small dormers. All this you see because you bought your tulip bulbs by the thousand instead of the dozen; and yet you will not love them as you would inevitably do if you, your very self, were responsible for their growth and increase.

But there are flowering things in the garden, even before the early-rising bulbs. One or two wild things lead the rest. Before even the daffodil has made ready to blow its golden trumpet, all along the borders the bloodroot is spreading its transcendent silver stars, and the green-striped sheaths of the star-of-Bethlehem are opening.



These came from the pasture corners and open woods of Long Island, where they have attended strictly to the business of their own maintenance, and gone on growing in spite of the change in proprietorship of the land from copper-colored nomads to Dutch burghers, and after them by process of evolution to the Long Island farmer with his thorough methods of cultivation ; yet even he fails to eradicate the tubers of the bloodroot, or the closely bound clumps of tiny bulbs which flower out into the star-of-Bethlehem.

And after them come the larger bulbs. First of all the daffodil, coming up before the frost cracks have melted together in the ground ; sending up their crowded spikes with a

wonderful concentration of purpose, — and almost while you watch them, one of the seeming leafy blades will swell into a bud and urge itself on, up and above the others, until it stands confessed a daffodil bud all yellowed in the sun, and ready to open its flower in the night, when no one can see the mystery of its birth.

I find myself especially interested in bulbs. The small, compact round which I hold in my hand in the spring includes such a variety of possibilities! If it has been turned up in the border by the spading-fork, it may be an ascension lily, or a Canadian lily, or a scarlet wood lily; and the little bulb knows where it belongs, though I do not. I cannot tell what sort of blossom it carries folded

within its layers, and what it will become when its growth impulse is awakened. If I put it back into the ground, I may be blindly planting it out of accord with its surroundings; for at this stage of its being it looks a bulb and nothing more. I do not know its nature by its shape or size or color; it keeps its individuality for summer days.

And there is the same difficulty with the lesser bulbs. Tulip and daffodil and narcissus are twin sisters or triplets, and one of them astray may be anybody's child; therefore it often happens that where I look for narcissus blooms I find daffodil, and where I expect a cluster of daffodil spears a single broad tulip leaf will appear, guarding a central bud.

CONTENT IN A GARDEN

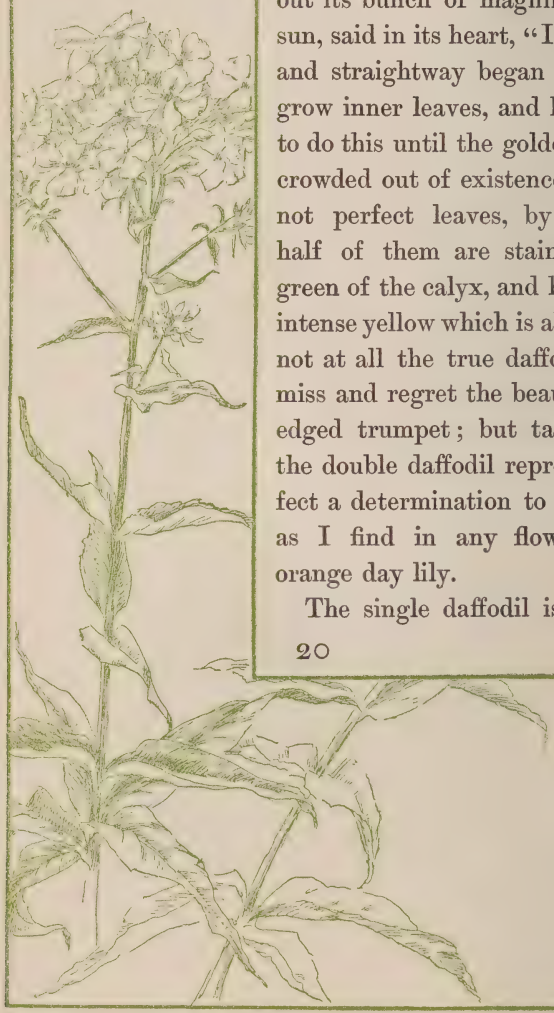
One of the wood walks of our Long Island homestead borders a long swale of black mucky ground which, in the days before the Brooklyn waterworks were, was a sluggish brook and a ferny swamp. It came to me to utilize this place by transplanting into it the army of poet's narcissus which regularly every spring budded on the lawn in millions, and later shriveled in millions, if the spring rains were not copious enough to satisfy their thirsty souls. And this plan answered beautifully. The narcissus sent up its spears of buds dutifully, and when they came to the bursting point, the swampy ground was, and is, every recurring spring, covered with a blanket of creamy white blossoms. But something else has hap-

pened. The first spring after they were planted, and buds began to show like sharp green bayonets along the rows, here and there I found a plant with longer leaves and fatter buds. Presently these outstripped the others, and opened into double daffodils; and spring after spring they have increased, making clusters of themselves in the rows, until now we go down to pick daffodils early in May, and narcissus some two weeks later, from mixed masses of yellow and white blossoms. It seems, then, that when bulbs are in question we sometimes reap where we have not sown.

It is a pity that daffodils ever took it into their heads to grow double. Some one of them at some time in

flower history must have had a double tulip for neighbor, and seeing it turn out its bunch of magnificence to the sun, said in its heart, "I can do that," and straightway began in a hurry to grow inner leaves, and has continued to do this until the golden trumpet is crowded out of existence. They are not perfect leaves, by any means; half of them are stained with the green of the calyx, and half are of an intense yellow which is almost orange, not at all the true daffodil color. I miss and regret the beautiful ruffled-edged trumpet; but taken as it is, the double daffodil represents as perfect a determination to grow and *be* as I find in any flower save the orange day lily.

The single daffodil is not so per-



sistent as the double, and, in fact, I am tempted to believe that it is naturally an ambitious flower, and changes its style from pure determination to do all it can in the way of what one of my farmer friends calls *blowth*. If it could know, down in the depths of its single heart, how fascinating its trumpeted flower can be, it would surely keep itself single. The very poise of the flower-head is the perfection of grace, and to watch an early cluster stand swaying upon their individual stems is to fancy they are like a group of nymphs, each one more graceful than the others.

The daffodil and narcissus, which are really blood relations, are the most prolific of flowers. If I plant a

single bulb, it will not be long in gathering a family, and in the course of two or three years the spot in which it grows will have become as populous as the tents of the patriarchs. Its clustering habit makes it a convenient bulb for transplantation. I need never search for separate ones in the flower beds. When I come upon them, there are hundreds packed so closely together that I peel them off like the scales of a pine cone; and each separate one I plant will make itself into another clump if I give it time. It is not so with tulips; their little rootlets run off and start a bulb at a greater distance.

In the fall or spring I fill my marigold and nasturtium beds with tulip bulbs, which, being early risers by

nature, get up and blossom in the spring days in great beauty, while the dormant speck of life in the marigold and nasturtium seed is just beginning to be conscious of an awakening thrill. I can fancy that through July and August and September days, when the summer flowers are rioting above them, the buried bulbs are quite as contentedly busy underground, living a hidden domestic life and adding children to themselves by dozens. Perhaps, — who knows? — they feel a sort of placid burgher contempt for the untimely activity of the seed plants that adds a stronger flavor of contentment to their own quiet days.

When I see them in May preparing for this peaceful underlife, I feel

like blessing them with Herrick's song To the Daffodil, and saying to them after him : —

> "Stay, stay,
> Until the hastening day has run
> But to the even-song,
> And having prayed together, we
> Will go with you along."

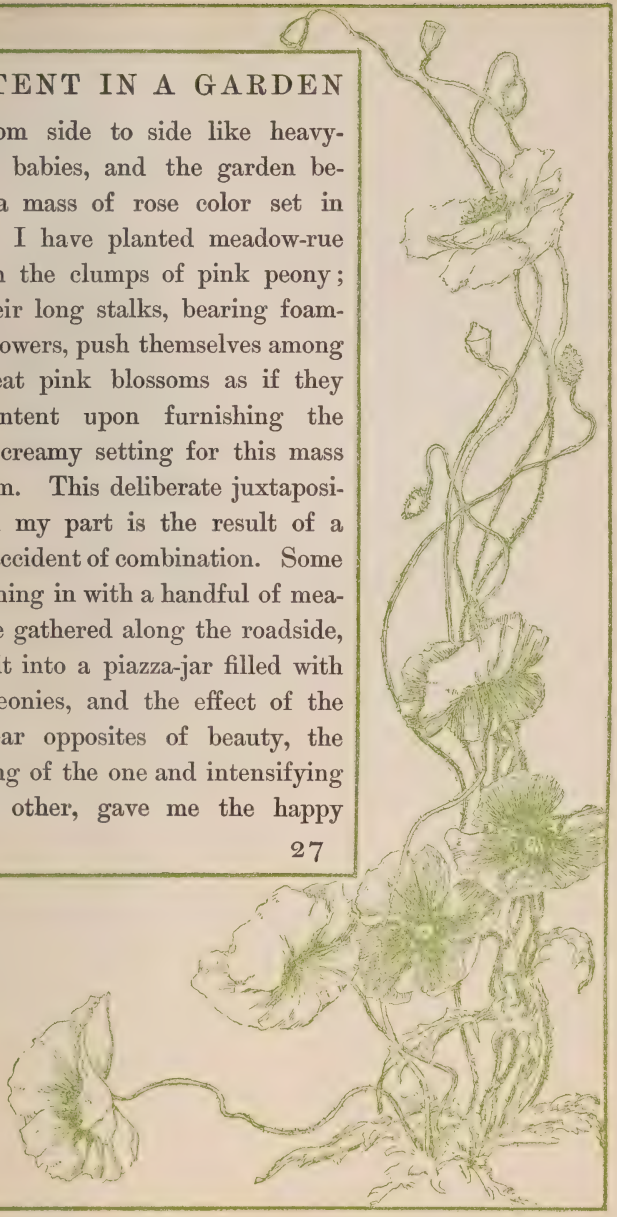
I am quite sure that the apartment-house fashion I have adopted of planting bulbs and seeds in layers is agreeable to both ; since they make no sign of disapproval, but go on, each doing its best in its own flower season to cover the ground with blossoms. It is a convenient fashion for the gardener, since spaces bare of either foliage or bloom suggest insufficient love or inefficient labor, and either of these would be out of harmony with the cheerful power and

grateful joy which reign in every well-kept garden.

After the daffodil comes the poet's narcissus; and after this, suddenly the garden is a garden of tulips; and by that time June has arrived, and it is the time of the iris; its variations of purple and lavender, and the bluish pinks and pinkish blues which tend toward those colors, are mingled in a crowd of stately blossoms which stream in radiating rows to the garden's outermost verge. Then a border of golden lilies encircles them, and outside of these a mound of scented honeysuckle hides for the time its purple-lined leaves under trumpeted flowers, and the growing sprays go wavering up in air in search of invisible fibre by which to climb.

At this time I am apt to think that the very limit of garden beauty has been reached; that in the summer procession I have planned, nothing can be so beautiful; and yet, all the while a detachment is on its way with its own special glories of color and costume. The tightly packed apple-shaped buds of pink peonies are beginning to show streaks of color, and when the latest of the fleur-de-lis has blossomed, and the purple banners which it had flaunted are dried and shriveled in the sun, the spaces between the radiating rows are filled with the deeply lobed leaves of peony, and the globes of buds are opening into scented flowers, each one like a separate bouquet too heavy for its stem. The great pink globes

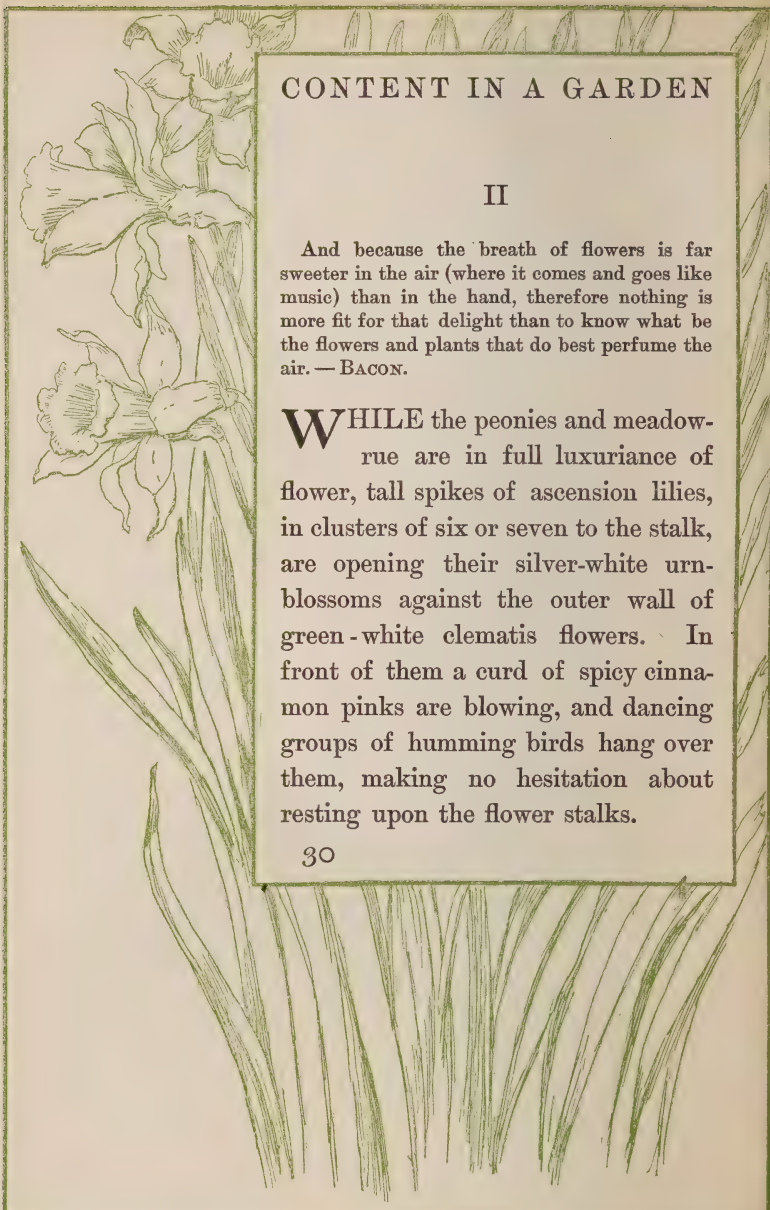
roll from side to side like heavy-headed babies, and the garden becomes a mass of rose color set in green. I have planted meadow-rue between the clumps of pink peony; and their long stalks, bearing foam-white flowers, push themselves among the great pink blossoms as if they were intent upon furnishing the proper creamy setting for this mass of bloom. This deliberate juxtaposition on my part is the result of a happy accident of combination. Some one coming in with a handful of meadow-rue gathered along the roadside, thrust it into a piazza-jar filled with pink peonies, and the effect of the two dear opposites of beauty, the softening of the one and intensifying of the other, gave me the happy



thought of planting them next each other. Although of such different natures they grow happily together, the bud-stalk of the rue threading a path to the light between the heavy green of peony leaves with judicious dexterity, and the roots love the soft garden mould, and seem to revel in unaccustomed ease of growth. They send up new leaves until late November, making inviting little cushions of columbine-shaped green, when nearly every other growth has succumbed to frost.

These two make a long step in the flower procession; they usher in white lilies, and the summer pinks which are ready for their places. How, I wonder, does each flower of each species know its time so inevitably!

Nothing can hasten, and nothing retard it; no seduction of summer-like spring days can bring it forward, or blustering of fall-like summer days delay it. When the time set for flowering by the far-off forbears of its race has come, it flowers. Surely such steadfastness and persistence, if given to man, would carry poor wavering humanity far on its way to accomplishment!



CONTENT IN A GARDEN

II

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes like music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. — BACON.

WHILE the peonies and meadow-rue are in full luxuriance of flower, tall spikes of ascension lilies, in clusters of six or seven to the stalk, are opening their silver-white urn-blossoms against the outer wall of green-white clematis flowers. In front of them a curd of spicy cinnamon pinks are blowing, and dancing groups of humming birds hang over them, making no hesitation about resting upon the flower stalks.

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I carry and leave my piazza chair under the balsam-fir trees, where half a layer of low-growing branches has been cut away to make its place, and give myself bits of the summer day wrapped in fragrance and beauty. And what morsels of happiness they are! There is a heavenly landscape beyond the pinks and peony flowers and high-piled white lilies, — a procession of mountains, changing from green-black to violet-blue as the sun smites the slopes and ridges, and fails to reach the hollows and deep-down chasms. What a blessed lot to be witness of such beauty! I am lost in wonder at the perfection of it possible to one small half acre and its outlook.

And the fragrance! From the

border of pinks, holding up millions of tufted umbrellas to the sun, streams a spicy odor which seems to cover the garden like a cloud. It projects itself along the path to the northern and eastern woods, and meets me, as I return by them, with something like a special greeting. As it spreads and sifts itself between the trunks of great beeches, losing itself among the branches of young balsam-fir trees, I can fancy their dipping little spiky green fingers into its intangible substance, and saying to each other and themselves, "Ho! ho! Here is a new smell! It is stronger than ours, but it smells like a brother!"

The fragrance overflows and pervades them all. The shoots which have sprung from scattered beechnuts

of two or three seasons ago, and stand trembling with haste to push their satin-folded leaves into space, are wrapped around with scented air which is not of the forest. And I, standing in the wood path, delighted through all my senses with the taste and smell of it, feel like greeting and advising it with speech; as if I were saying, "Go south into the pastures, my beloved! Float under the sun and over the grass. The woods have their own sweetness, and will not miss you!"

This unvoiced thought speaks to the air, as I come out of the shadow and lean over the wall of my garden. The pinks are standing in the sun and never heed my thought. They are like little censers, set by nature

to distribute her hidden manufactures, her distillations and cunning extracts, and each tuft of fringed blossom obediently urges its delicate spiral into the general cloud which hangs in the upper air. I seem to see it as I stand by the wall looking at the millions of blossoms. I can taste it and smell it; what ails my eyes that I do not really see it? It is there; it has form; I know it is cloud-shaped and blows hither and thither, because I can follow its boundaries; why should I not see it? And then I fall into speculation as to what I should see if my eyes were privileged to all of nature's miracles.

I think the color of this one would be palest pink, with bluish tints and shadows and flecks of deeper color;

where the underside would reflect the blue-green of the leaf mat from which the blossoms spring, — the wonderful blue-green which is like the shadow of a wave. And this, to my fancy, makes the cloud like an opal, a floating, intangible, gigantic opal, which is made of the breath of flowers, and floats and breaks and wanders hither and thither, a body and no body, a spirit of a cloud.

It is, in truth, the spiritual part of the garden, this changing mass which hovers snow-white over the lily beds, and rose-pink over the peonies, and purple and lavender where lilacs and fleur-de-lis are in bloom, and golden-yellow where the ranks of lemon lily stand against the garden wall.

I have great and overwhelming

joy in them all, even though my outward, practical, bodily eyes refuse to see them as they should. Surely we might look at them through the closed limit of our present powers, as one looks at nature through a window! I am glad I can follow and recognize them in unbroken masses. I am certain I should not enjoy in equal degree a crowd of sweet-smelling varicolored bits of cloud hovering over my garden, — a hand's breadth of faintly fragrant purple, and a shred of spicy pink, and a blot of pungent, ethereal blue crowding one another; but my mind can see with joy a bank of golden cloud lying above the yellow lilies in a giant curve like a cloudy comet, compassing the entire sweep and boundary of the garden,

while lying within it like an amethyst wave rests the purple breath of the fleur-de-lis.

In spite of my joy in all things which pertain to the garden, I can easily divide them into those which delight me more, and those which delight me less. There are flowers, — good and virtuous ones, of the order of tulips and poppies, and larkspur and columbine, and tiger lily and hollyhock, — indeed thousands of them, which stir me not a whit. Some of them have been loved and praised by many generations of mankind and sung of by poets and writers since literature began, yet I have no tenderness for them, — none of the sudden warmth of heart of which I am gladly and thankfully conscious

in the memory or presence of certain other flowers which make no effort to be beautiful, which simply *are*. Some of these dearest and most beloved we can almost believe have the fine inward existence which we call soul.

It is much easier, perhaps, to point out those which can lay no claim to souls than those which can. For instance, in spite of its majesty of size and growth, I call the tiger lily a soulless thing, and yet I have so encouraged its presence that in early and late August there are thousands of its stately stalks parading in my garden. It is the world which has come in, the gorgeously arrayed world, and I feel the seductiveness of its brilliant apparel. Scarlet poppies swarm

around and between them, and even while I respond to their trumpet notes of color, I call them also in my heart a soulless crowd.

Perhaps in all these things it is the want of odor, of the honeyed breathing of blossom, of the invisible sweetness which reaches out and clasps us gently in elusive suggestion, that influences my classification of odorless flowers as soulless ones; and in truth, behind the doubt lies the fact that all the flowers I worship breathe odor, while those to which I lend an indulgent or careless appreciation lack that crowning charm of flowerhood.

Flowers in masses give fragrance in masses, and if we have our enjoyment whole, instead of broken into bits, we must plant and sow with unstinted

liberality. This, as I have said, is not difficult; indeed it is delightful! We can plant largely, even in limited ground, if we have learned to understand the idiosyncrasies of different families and the gregariousness of all.

There are few solitary flowers, as few in proportion as there are hermits among men. They enjoy living together, and even among wild things we find them founding vegetable cities whenever circumstances are favorable, much as men cluster around seaports or at good landing-places on navigable rivers.

I have learned a lesson of the comradeship of plants from a little settlement of them growing on a near roadside bank on the way to the village. Here, in a few square feet of earth,

a dozen species find a common home, and share it with the grass, and each in turn rises up and smiles at the world with its particular blossom.

While in flower it seems to own the whole bit of ground in fee simple. We say in passing, "Look at that patch of buttercups," or "daisies" or "redweed" or "purple aster," not realizing that it is in reality a patch of a dozen, touching toes under the sod, and living together in entire and blessed harmony.

What an advantage, in decorative gardening, to learn that for the most part plants will joyfully share their holdings!

I have set myself to learn which of the selected darlings of my garden love each other well enough to live

together in the same few feet of earth, so that every inch of ground may blossom in a continuous wave of beauty.

There are certain flowers that by reason of intensity of color and freedom of growth are hardly compatible with the general congregations of plants, and the nasturtium belongs to this free-growing, assertive, half-lawless kind; yet by reason of the bounteousness and spicy sweetness of its nature, no flower-lover can afford to do without it. Of all growths, it seems to demand the least and give the most. If you plant a seed in the bottom crevice of a stone wall, in a month it will reach up healthy aromatic stems and climb it, covering it speedily with spreading disks of leaves

and trumpeted golden flowers. But it will also overshadow and crowd every plant within its reach, sending out root shoots and side shoots and every kind of flowery shoot with objectionable neighborly freedom, the more difficult to deal with because of its inherent goodness. Therefore I have given my nasturtiums a garden of their own, and placed it beside the road, in front of the house, and really overlooking the garden. Here it is well content, sunning itself all the summer in the eyes of visitors and passers-by, and making of itself as many colors and as much sweetness as is in its bountiful nature. I know a woman whom in my own mind I call Nasturtium. She is a true human flower, tawny and beautiful, full

of life and good nature, giving with a free hand of all her gifts, — and they are many, — yet perhaps — I am loath to say it — a trifle too pervasive. For in the human garden we must strictly observe our own limits. Possibly all the wisdom and ambition of mankind would be well exchanged for the content of average natural growth within fixed laws.

In planning possible combinations and results of planting, one is apt to remember wonderful and delightful things seen in the fields and meadows and in the wild gardens of nature, — accidental masses of bloom and color which make one wonder why our cultivated gardens should be so wanting in general effect. Of course the largeness of nature's arrangements

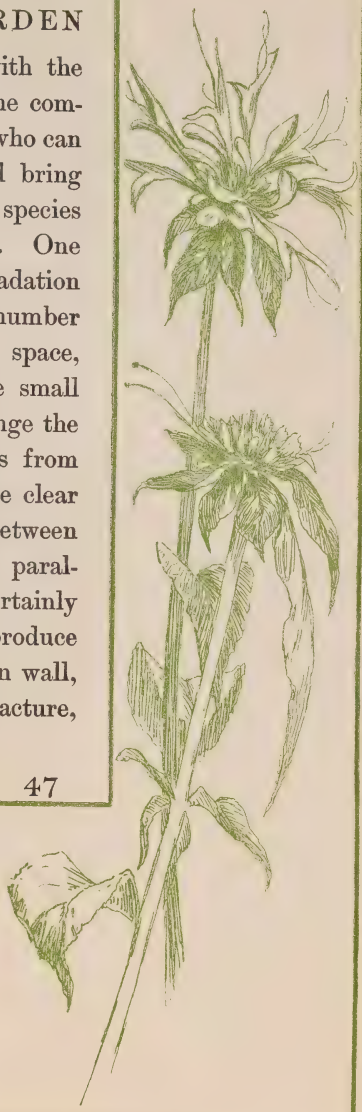
has something to do with their success. The lavish spread of rhododendron thickets, the laurel-covered mountain-slopes, the mats and masses of lilies in low-lying meadows, or the fence angles filled with the yellow splendor of "black-eyed Susan," are things which we can hardly compete with in breadth. But on the other hand, many of those gorgeous effects are produced not by space, but by a gradual leading up to masses of color. One never finds a clearly cut outline, a sharp departure from one tint to another, in a wild garden. Even the lavender bloom of the little spring Quaker-lady will spread itself in the meadows in larger or smaller masses, reaching out fingers of delicate warmth into the yellow-green of the grass, and

showing no dividing line between. And in the same way solid patches of blue-fringed gentian will make for themselves gently elongated reaches of color, wedges of blue, which melt imperceptibly into the surrounding green.

What one chiefly needs to study in the color effect of a flower garden is gradation. It is so to plant our comparatively small spaces that one tint may lie softly against another, each one leading up or melting into deeper and more solid and compact blossom, leaving fringes of color to mingle and lose themselves in lighter or darker tints and tones.

If this gradual intensification of color is possible in wild masses, and with only one tint to deal with, it

is still more easily possible with the various colors which are at the command of the flower-gardener, who can control a greater variety and bring within small space flowers and species from all distances and lands. One can produce the effect of gradation and intensification of color by number of tints instead of breadth of space, just as a painter, within the small circle of his palette, can arrange the infinite gradation which leads from the upper blue through all the clear light green spaces which lie between it and the orange and crimson parallels of a sunset sky; and certainly if he can do this, we can produce within the bounds of a garden wall, in tints of nature's own manufacture,



something akin to the sweep of color made by the painter-hand of nature.

Of course these color effects must be changeable ones, for flowers vary with the months, whole tribes of them electing to bloom in June, and perhaps other tribes in July, and others again in August and September, or even like the chrysanthemum, come to their crowns in late October weather. So for this reason, if for no other, we must know our flowers well before we attempt to juggle with them. We must understand their times and seasons, and not undertake a gradation or a contrast with flowers one species of which may have chosen June for its season and another have elected to blossom in September. In this assemblage of friends, where we

wish to get the most beautiful results of friendliness, — perfect harmony, — we must take careful thought about our assemblages, and try to pair the habits and preferences of our guests, so that although they may be

> "foreigners from many lands,
> They form one social shade."

To expect harmony of effect from the flowers of, for instance, the blue larkspur and the scarlet poppy would be as futile as to expect to harmonize the point of view of the early Puritans and the court of King George. But you may make the great balls of the pinkish-lavender-colored poppy neighbor your blue larkspur, and find yourself surprised to see how they affiliate. And earlier in the season the same sympathy will exist where

outlying rows of the queenly fleur-de-lis flaunt their banners of darker and lighter blue against the pink-purple of the great plumes of the lilac.

It is quite possible to repeat these gradations and sympathies of color more than once in the season; for the same ground may be occupied together by two, and occasionally by three, races of flowers which carry the same tints and blossom successively. The cardinal principle is, taking the whole area of the garden, to have every inch of it in flower from June to October, and so to plant it that intense colors of different tints shall occupy fixed limits, as far apart from each other as the extent of the garden will allow. All

that is intermediate must be filled with the satellites of these colors, leading down from them to a common ground where they can mingle peacefully.

Of course the two royal colors are red and blue, and these should stand at opposite ends of the garden; but red will melt into orange, and orange into yellow, and yellow into paler tints, until you reach white without anything like a shock of contrast; and in like manner blue can be trailed into the pink-lavender of which nature is so fond, and then into cold pink, and deeper again into crimson, or it may flow out in paler tints until it also reaches that absence of color which we call white.

This color gradation can be pro-

duced upon twenty square yards of ground, or upon a quarter of an acre — if you are so happy as to possess that much ground in a garden — but it will take more than one season to inaugurate the plan of planting. Once begun, however, every year will add lines and shades of color and beauty, until your garden becomes the highest and most perfect source of purely æsthetic enjoyment. The successive waves of color, as week succeeds week and month follows month, seem to flood the senses with delight, and overflow the sombre days with a beauty not dependent upon sunlight or even upon sunny moods of mind.

To compass this beauty it is necessary not only to love and enjoy the

garden, but to study and think about it; and this, fortunately, only intensifies our enjoyment, since if anything in the world is found to be truly good and truly beautiful, without flaw and without fault, the more intimately we know it the better.

It is well, before beginning to classify garden flowers, to make a list of all those one knows the best and loves the most. It is no more worth while in the garden than in the world to cultivate an indiscriminate lot of mere acquaintances. It is much more desirable to select only those with endearing qualities, — for flowers have their endearing qualities as people have, although what are qualities in one we are apt to call virtues in the other.

After your selections are complete it is best to make and elaborate a plan, drawn to a scale, of the ground which is to blossom in summer. A small sheet of paper can be made to represent all the gradations of color one wishes to compass, and on the margin can be arranged in order, with their particular tint, the names of all the families it is desirable to cultivate.

If the garden be a parallelogram, as most gardens are, the sweep of the color may be from the two ends toward the middle, leaving the long side borders for things which do not come into the general scheme, — those, in fact, which are exceptions or experiments. Of course, this plan of planting demands quantity as

well as quality, but one may take a small portion of the ground for it in the beginning, waiting for the yearly increase which, in time, will flood the garden with beauty.

Because blue and red are stronger or more intense than other colors, they should start from opposite ends of the garden; also the names placed against each color-band in the scale should indicate both perennials and annuals of different dates of flowering, so that none of the months may be bare of bloom.

It is not at all a difficult way of planting; it is simply *interesting*. It classifies plants by their flower color only, and each year adds to one's resources and widens the number in each color-band until it is full

and overflowing, and the garden has become a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

Many gardens may have been planted to secure an effect of gradation in color, but my first thought of it came to me years ago in a place I like to remember. A great part of the beauty of Mrs. Thaxter's house in the Isles of Shoals was made up of flowers. It was far more enjoyable than her garden, where the flowers grew luxuriantly at their own sweet wills, or at the will of the planter, never troubling their heads about agreeing with their neighbors. I remember it as a disappointment that a woman with so exquisite a sense of combination and gradation in the arrangement of flowers, should

have so little thought of color effect in her garden.

But in the house! I have never anywhere seen such realized possibilities of color! The fine harmonic sense of the woman and artist and poet thrilled through these long chords of color, and filled the room with an atmosphere which made it seem like living in a rainbow.

The tops of the low bookcases, that filled all the wall space not opened in windows to the sea, were massed with her beloved flowers. I remember she told me that at four in the morning, when the sea and sky seemed to be spread for her alone, she was always out gathering them. I like to think of her there — the tall, white figure standing under the

sky and beside the sea which laps her much-loved Isles of Shoals, among the flowers in the early morning, which, although bare of humanity, she found full to the brim of the beauty which her soul loved.

Later her friends always found her in her room, with books and piano and flowers, making a harmony together which must live in many hearts until Heaven substitutes something as good and without decay.

I remember that the grand piano, which at ten in the morning was always giving out harmonies under the hands of some of Mrs. Thaxter's friends whose natural speech was music, stood against the end of the chimney-piece, and that pictures

hung above it and leaned against it. Just at the end where it touched the low shelf of the chimney, there commenced a bank of small white poppies, very tender in color and effect, with half-transparent leaves, showing all the veins and fibres of structure, like a baby's skin, and speckled by the anthers which stood like a fringed crown around the seed-cups. Next to these came pale-tinted poppies, and pink ones with white edges, and then the satisfying conch-shell pink, and deeper ones, and deeper still, until it ended in the peculiar *pink-red* which is found only in the poppy tribe.

There were pictures everywhere on the walls; but over the white end of this bank of flowers — the tender,

half-transparent white of which I have spoken — hung a little picture of the sea, one of Childe Hassam's, — as blue as the sea itself, with a blue made up of a thousand tints and shadows and reflections such as the sea holds and keeps the secret of for the most part, but which it has given to this painter, and to a few others who love it. This bit of blue above the white was the note of contrast which made the perfection of the whole.

Everywhere around the room roses were sweeping into depths of roses, and nasturtiums going from palest yellow into winelike claret, and blue of asters into darks of purples, and sweet-peas stood in groups on the tables and by the windows; but my

eyes always came back to the soft gradation over the chimney-piece, with the bit of blue sea over the white. Both blue and white were so tender and mixed in quality, and yet so strong in contrast, they might have been born of the bass and treble notes which went floating over them from the great piano.

It was in this room, and enjoying its color as I have enjoyed few things in life, and conscious all the while of its impermanence, conscious that in lastingness of quality it was scarcely more than a dream of color, that I began to think of making a summer dream of it in my garden. It is a summer dream, and yet a reality — not only to me but to other garden lovers; but I still enjoy the re-

membrance of its source, and shall, perhaps, enjoy it beyond the limits which separate earthly and heavenly gardens.

III

EVERYTHING gains by proper companionship and surroundings, and flowers are no exception to this rule. Indeed, when they are left to run wild they have an unconscious aptitude of choice of companions which enhance their own charms of beauty. A wild rose will rarely show its own fragrant pink beauty beside the orange stateliness of the meadow lily, and the purple rocket prefers to rear its masses of bloom among the tender green of young maple shoots, and seldom mingles with the wild sunflower which borders the road line of the same berried field; and surely

we, who think we think more wisely, should have a care how we plant warring schemes of beauty.

We often get a profound lesson in color sympathies in the variations of tone in masses of the same species growing together. Take, for instance, a mass of nasturtiums running from pale yellow through all intermediate shades of deep yellow into orange, and from orange into maroon, deepening and lightening everywhere in most perfect gradation and richest contrast of color, the whole a color scheme of yellows, browns, and reds, more perfect than painter of pictures could devise. I remember seeing on a summery March day, in far-away Santa Barbara, a broad bed of pink verbenas, where the flower

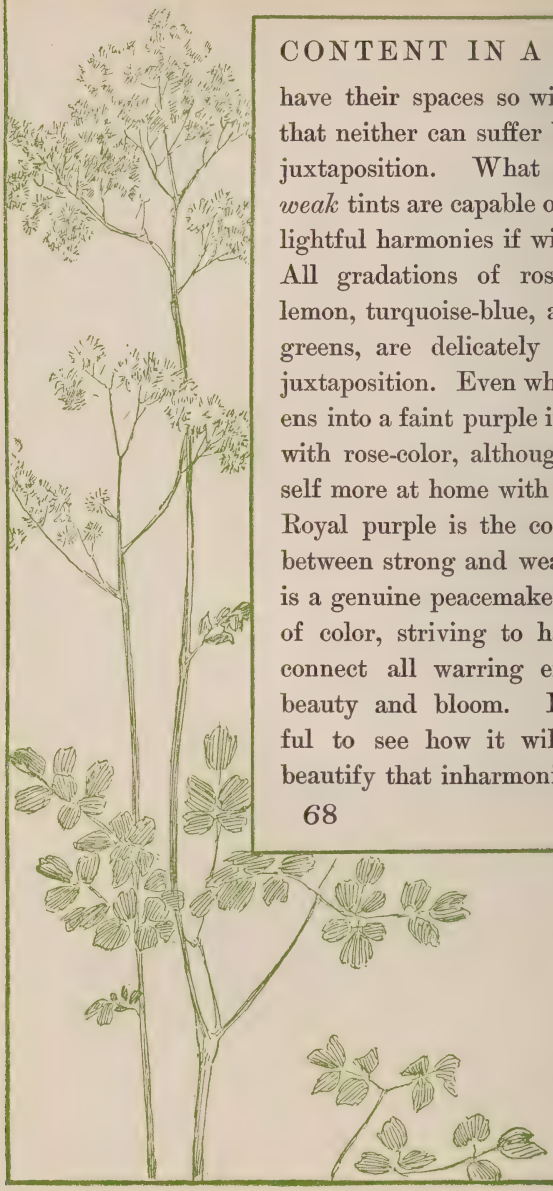
heads stood up sturdily as our northern verbenas never do, laying one pink face against another until all the green undergrowth of stem and leafage was entirely hidden and the surface was one varying spread of color, running from tinted white to deepest rose, — as perfect a patch of bloom and color as one could possibly imagine. It made one almost hold one's breath to stand in the faint cloud of its perfume and feel its beauty through all the fibres of sense. It would be sacrilege even in imagination to think of a mass of scarlet planted close beside this rose-cloud of color. There is a clash of the elements of enjoyment in it which might almost be heard, and yet many an amateur gardener would deliber-

ately plant the primal seeds of all this warring perfection of beauty side by side in her garden. No! my gentle gardener, consider those little brown seeds in your hand in the light of all their future color and splendor, and believe it is just as wicked to plant scarlet and rose-color side by side as it would be to put ribbons of those colors together on your hat. No sane woman could ever be guilty of that enormity, but many an otherwise sinless soul has committed the weighty offense of thoughtless flower-planting. Scarlet and orange tribes should be separated from most other flower families by a broad space of green, a comparative expanse of turf in which the impression of their splendor can be

dissipated before one comes to the rose-color of most of our garden blooms.

You may safely trust flowers of royal blue in their vicinity, and know that they will be able to hold themselves with valor. Monkshood and larkspur can fight their own battles and be beautiful, even in conflict with the victorious oranges and wine-colors of the nasturtiums; but as you value your after peace of mind and sense of justice, let no weak flowers, or "poor pale blooms," come within the range of the warring colors of orange and red.

In planting for effect one must consider the qualities of color as carefully as if they were to be laid upon canvas. Vivid and faint colors must



have their spaces so widely removed that neither can suffer by contrast or juxtaposition. What painters call *weak* tints are capable of the most delightful harmonies if wisely planned. All gradations of rose-color, lilac, lemon, turquoise-blue, and the paler greens, are delicately delightful in juxtaposition. Even when lilac deepens into a faint purple it will not war with rose-color, although it finds itself more at home with deeper tints. Royal purple is the connecting link between strong and weak colors. It is a genuine peacemaker in the world of color, striving to harmonize and connect all warring expressions of beauty and bloom. It is wonderful to see how it will soften and beautify that inharmonious pink tint

which we call magenta, and which we repudiate in dyes, although nature clings to it with love, playing infinite variations upon it in summer and autumn wild flowers.

The most difficult and apparently alien color in all the list is the peculiar pink orange of the tiger lily. It fights like its royal godfather with every other tint in the garden, but its magnificence of form and growth would secure for itself a separate domain even if it did not refuse to blend its tints with other flowers. Good gardeners know, or should seek to know, all the idiosyncrasies of plants, and many of them understand very well how to make the most of each species by judicious juxtaposition with others, so that the beauty of

each may be enhanced by contrast or harmony of color during its season of blossoming.

We have selected certain flowers, as we have certain animals, for adoption and domestication, without much regard for their own tastes and preferences. A botanist goes wandering around the world with his eyes open for every bubble of color and beauty, and in the tangle of some far-off western or eastern or southern forest he finds a flower growing with its kindred in the beauty of perfect companionship and perfect surroundings. He seizes it for his own, perhaps names it with his name, and it becomes a new specimen in our gardens, and grows cheek by jowl with some other ravished specimen which it had

always avoided in its own habitat and which it would willingly avoid until the end of time.

A flower does not lose its antipathies or likings in man's companionship, any more than a dog will cease to hunt its natural prey because generations of him have been supplied with food by man. The instinct of species and race survives under any and all surroundings, and gentle as they are, flowers certainly do indulge in antipathies, and will recede as far as possible from certain others, or even decline to exist if they have to accept existence at the price of distasteful companionship. We may explain it as we choose, and give philosophical reasons for it, but the fact remains that certain plants abso-

lutely refuse to live and thrive in the neighborhood of certain others.

Gardeners understand the fact, and explain it by talking of different soils and different exposure and many other things, but I am afraid the innocent creatures indulge in what we have agreed to call human passions, and are susceptible of *hate* toward certain qualities which are antagonistic to their own.

In truth, most flowers are sociably inclined, yet if we plant them with something which they detest, one of the two dainty creatures will quietly disappear. Some fine morning its place is empty and we have learned a lesson.

If we of the human race could as quietly divorce ourselves from obnox-

ious people, — those toward whom instinctive dislike springs in our hearts, — withdrawing ourselves by night, as it were, and taking our seed with us flee unto those whom we could love, what a blessed quietness would fall upon human life! The very peace of heaven would compass us. But, alas, there are houses and lands, and they are immovable.

Perhaps the very peace of heaven will consist in a possibility of finding exactly where we belong, of ranging ourselves with those of like aspirations and enjoyments, choosing our neighborhood with souls which have like interpretations of life's meanings. "Live near what you admire," preaches one of the old English poets, and flowers in the garden seem to

repeat the lesson, for both themselves and us.

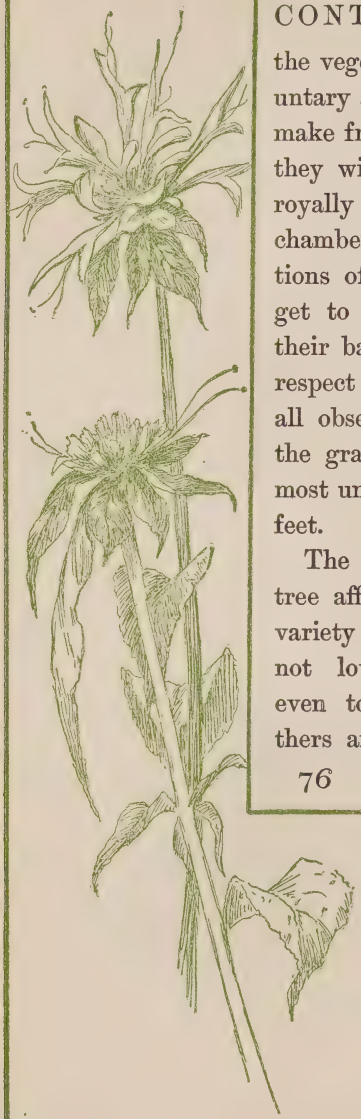
In the world we are gathered heterogeneously, as if lavender and bitter-root, and sweet verbena and hoarhound should grow together; and thinking of these strong and bitter plants, I am moved to wonder why they and their like should choose to draw only bitterness from the earth where other plants find sweetest odors and lasting fragrance.

We read — "For friendships be of God," and certainly if that be their blessed source, it is fortunate that the friendships of plants are much more numerous than their antipathies, and that more of them will dwell together in perfect harmony than in antagonism, both in

a state of nature and of cultivation. They will even quite consent to occupy in turn each other's beds, one giving place and standing-room to another when its own season of bloom has passed, gathering in its roots with pathetic docility to allow room for its successor, and wrapping itself in sleep which may be more or less dreamless until its next season for growth and bloom arrives.

There are certain plants which have a friendship for man, and prefer to grow in his vicinity.

The white clover and the dandelion are as much domestic plants as the cat and the dog are domestic animals. They choose always to live in the vicinity of human beings, while it must be confessed that many of



the vegetable tribes shrink from voluntary association with us. We can make friends with most of them, and they will reward us constantly and royally if we give them the guest chamber and observe the fine conditions of hospitality; but if we forget to make their beds or arrange their baths, they have too much self-respect to remain. We may ignore all observances with the clover and the grass, for they will blossom almost under the tread of our careless feet.

The whole tribe of ferns have tree affinities, choosing each its own variety of tree friends. Ferns do not love mankind; they do not even tolerate our sisters and brothers among the cattle. There is a

beautiful family of semi-evergreen fern which will grow a crown and spread a radius of two-foot length of leaf on even a rock foundation, as long as it is under balsamic shadow. Whether the exposure is north or south or east or west, it makes no difference so long as it can stand, and sleep, and grow, under its beloved evergreens. In fact, on the north side of Onteora Mountain, where juniper — "the sharpe sweete Juniper," King James of Scotland calls it — adds its almost solid shelter to that of the hemlock, it will send out long, delicate, semi-transparent leaves in sheaves which are almost tropical in their luxuriance. Occasionally you may find a root of this variety in the sugar camps where

the lady-fern grows, but, as a rule, it will disappear when the woods are open to the sunlight, scorning all but its own chosen companionship.

But the lady-fern, which is like the wood-fern in substance, only a trifle lighter in color and a thought more ethereal in substance, will not grow at all in the fir woods; it prefers the sugar-maple camps on the southern and eastern slopes, and will send forth stately leaves of finest fibre, and unroll its disks with a glad alacrity. If the woodcutters come in winter and cut away the maples, the lady-fern will not die or migrate as the maiden-hair fern makes haste to do; it simply dwindles and deteriorates until it becomes almost another species, a sister race dwarfed

and hardened instead of encouraged and blessed by the blessed sunshine. Finally the grass comes creeping closer and closer about it, until it only shows as patches of vivid green where spreading infant fronds struggle through tangling grass roots.

> "Where lichens mock
> The marks on a moth, and small ferns fit
> Their teeth to the polished rock."

These are the baby ferns which grow wherever gray lichens spread their scales on a rocky bed. The lichens never grow alone, and the ferns never grow alone, and who shall say they do not seek each other's companionship?

The ferns are truly a loyal race; strong in their attachments and friendships, yet more varied in their

tastes than most of the vegetable tribes, — since we find their species as widely divided in choice of habitat as swamp, brookside, roadside, banks, bare rocks, and maple and hemlock forests can part them. We might say that these instances show preferences only, and not friendships; but ferns certainly make choice between tree species, and adhere to their choice.

Although all members of the fern tribe turn coldly from human companionship, we may often reasonably flatter ourselves that we are favorites in the garden; and surely nothing can make one more contented with oneself than to be accepted as a friend by its sinless population, — to fancy that the flowers do not mind

being picked and carried from their place because it is we who do it, and not another. We may even fancy them willing to accept an over-mastering human love in exchange for the natural joy of sunlight, and we rejoice in a sort of mysterious freedom to meddle with their lives and habits.

It is not hard to believe that there are individual likings between man and plant; that they will respond more promptly and grow more gladly for one person than for another; and this belief (or shall we call it a fancy?) tends to great content in our intercourse with them.

It is not only our own personal associations with the garden which give happiness, but there are mem-

ories of friends and people which grow to belong with certain things that flourish year by year in one's own little acre, which are not the least of garden joys.

When my plate-shaped yellow marigold-blooms cover their allotted garden space, spanning the days from July to late October, I look at them and remember walking in an English garden with its appreciative owner. It was Miss Mulock who gathered the seeds and gave them to me with the same hands which had written John Halifax and many another worthy piece of literature, and when I returned, as an offset, a small sod of pinks from my Long Island garden, she wrote that "a little

American worm" had come over with it.

There is a row of fragrant, hardy double violets, which sends out blossoms every spring under the windows of our Long Island homestead, the pioneer plants of which were carefully dug from his own garden bed, and wrapped in paper, and given into my hands by William Cullen Bryant; and every spring the thought of him "smells sweet and blossoms in the dust" where they grow.

The wide-spread lemon lilies — which burn so yellow over every inch of my garden in June — are sprung from a single five-fingered root brought from one of the old manor houses on the Hudson forty years ago. Its progeny has peopled the

grounds of the family homestead on Long Island, spreading from thence into innumerable farm gardens, and now, after distinguishing my own garden with its beauty, is silently making its way into the rocky garden spaces of all Onteora.

The radiant fleur-de-lis, which radiates from the garden centre, came through friendly hands in a little box of selected roots from a garden in Cambridge. Some one had told the original possessor of my kindred passion for the iris; and the impulse of satisfaction at finding a fellow-appreciator of what was at that time an almost unappreciated flower culminated in the gift. This varied, orchid-like collection was preceded and welcomed by the or-

dinary deep purple and blue fleur-de-lis, the roots of which I had picked from the old post road of Long Island, where they had been thrown from an overstocked lawn or garden border.

It is strange how precious growths will come of themselves to a true garden lover! Every one has experienced these mysterious acquisitions. Things come from no one knows where, and make themselves at home, and grow into important members of the garden family, self-introduced at the first, but apparently sure of their welcome. It was so that my Colorado columbine appeared in my garden world. One morning in early June I found its budded stalk standing in the strip of gravel, under

the drip of the house eaves. I had no columbine; I had planted none. Indeed, it is out of my policy to plant seeds, unless they speedily make roots and take care of themselves; and although the columbine will do this, it is at best an evanescent flower, and a little too giddy for my requirements. But here it was! and I treated it as a lady should treat an unknown and unexpected visitor: I waited for developments. After a morning or two they came. A very hearty, healthy, dragon-fly-looking blossom, in white and violet-blue, with a three-inch spread of wings; altogether aristocratic-looking, — like a lady of fashion in her newest Easter bonnet, — and totally unconscious of and

indifferent to the hard gravelly furrow under her feet. She was admirable, but where did she come from? I had never seen a columbine of the same freedom and largeness of growth, or the same freshness and purity of color.

A few days after this I started on a journey to Denver. At certain springs in Colorado, the train suddenly emptied itself of people, who rushed out into the blue freshness of Colorado air to look at the great spring lake and the circle of faintly drawn snow-tipped ghostly mountains of its environment. "Good mountains, dead and gone to heaven," I quoted, as I stepped from the car, and there stood a boy in front of me offering a great bunch of violet-blue

and white columbine. They seemed so a part of the blue air and the blue spring-lake water that I hardly recognized them at first; but when I did, and questioned the boy, lo and behold, they were wild flowers, growing in the mountain pastures — the chosen and representative Colorado State flower. My mind went back to the single stately stalk in my far-off Onteora garden, and at once I grasped the meaning of its stateliness of mien. It was a representative flower; the chosen blossom of the Golden State, and by some miracle of aerial transportation it had anticipated and flattered me with an acquaintance. Now, every June when it appears and curves its purple horns, and unfolds its wings in my

Onteora garden, they will unfold to my sight a vision of the snow mountains and violet-blue distances of Colorado.

I have buried the seeds among the stones which lie at the very base of the garden wall, and the plants are making long, straight roots, like shrunken carrots, down between the stones, and will send up stalks of early June blossom between the crowding stems of clematis. Apparently the species finds room enough for all its needs in the narrowest space, and thanks the world profusely in its own fashion.

Our native columbine blossoms earlier and paints itself in reds and yellows instead of white and lavender. It is a little sister of the

queenly western plant, delicate but hardy, and will grow in gardens with right good will, although losing thereby something of its fairy-like aerial grace.

I wish I knew how it was that the poppy tribe decided upon coming to me, for it is certain I never planted them; and yet only last summer they appeared in battalions, flaunting their silken banners over every foot of the garden. Of course I saw them as they grew, and said to myself "Here is a poppy," and a few feet away, "There is a poppy," and in a week or two the indescribably graceful arch of stem, holding a folded bud, was everywhere to be seen; and then how they blossomed! It was a veil, a flame-colored silken

veil, spread over the midsummer scarcity of bloom. But where did they come from? If my garden were an old one, instinct with seed, like the acres of the Long Island homestead, I should understand that the tiny infinitesimal thing might have been sleeping in the ground for ages, still holding within its atom of matter the principle of life, like Egyptian wheat in mummy cases. But my garden was a wild pasture just a few years since, with no garden history, no buried forbears, no traditions; and whither and whence came the poppies?

As I walk in my garden in late June and early July mornings, I find the innumerable buds hanging their heads like shamed babies, and

never will they lift them until they are dressed and ruffled with a hundred leaves of silkiest silk. I am conscious of a certain tenderness which creeps in and mingles with the irresistible color-delight which I gladly acknowledge; and I am also conscious of a little witch-like, faintly bitter sense of something within them which they possess and withhold, a potent power of which they are conscious, but administer only under compulsion. If they were not so beautiful, they would rank with the herbs, the little doctors of the earth.

As a rule the little doctors stand in plain attire, but no flower on earth is better or more variously clothed than the poppy. It can show every

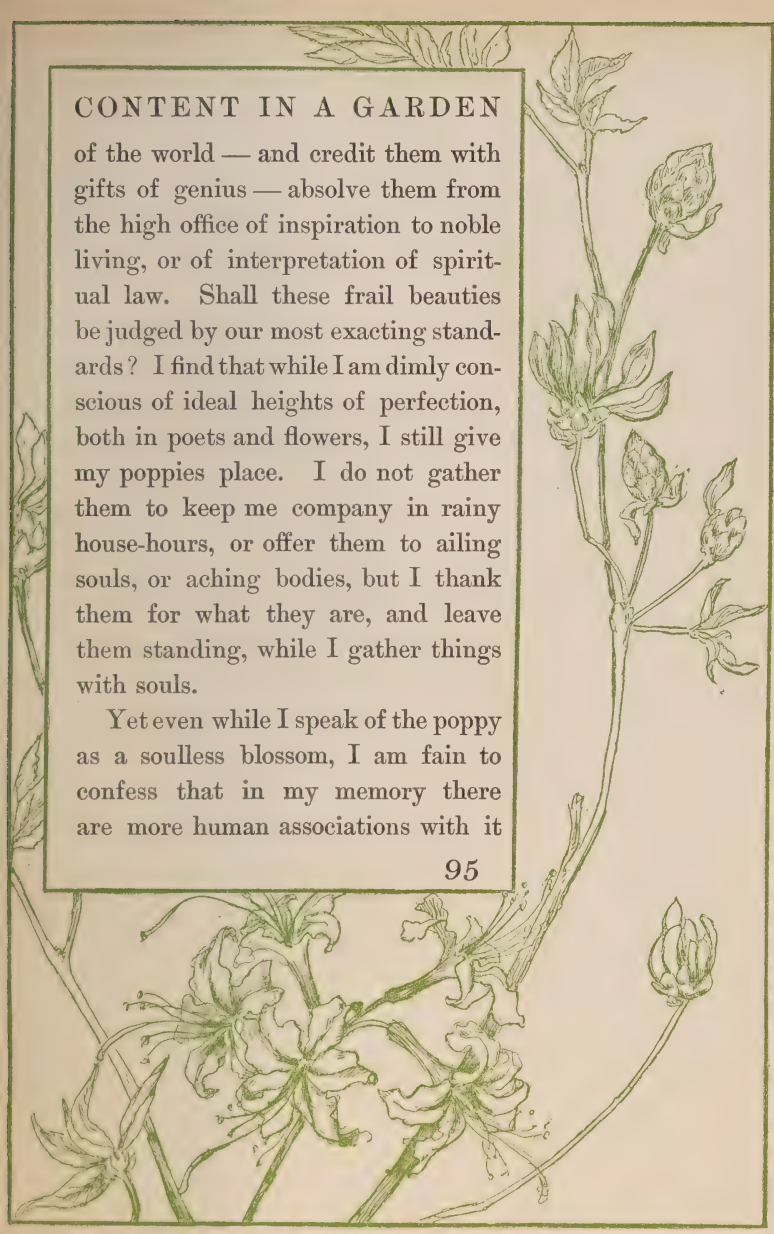
mingling and streaking and stain from white to black, standing at intervals along the way in purest tints of pink, or scarlet, or purple. In all this it seems as if it might be an evolution from the tulip, which runs the gamut of color in the same way. I mind me that this gayly dressed and brilliant creature casts aside its gypsy cloak when it reaches the Rocky Mountains, and stands clad in folds and flounces of crapy white — a tall and stately plant, its long green leaves as prickly as those of a thistle, and yet it is an unmistakable poppy, with drooping buds and crowned seed-cup and a flower head which will measure eight inches across.

It would be too much to expect of the gorgeousness of color carried by

the poppy tribe, that it should so gratify the joy of seeing, — playing triumphantly upon every color-note of the gamut, — and yet give in addition the preciousness of odor. It is as if one should claim with the physical charm of early girlhood the perfected soul of the woman. Ah, the qualities differ! One's own heart would go out of one, and follow through the world in the inevitable train of such a combination. Yet I cannot help thinking that it is because of the poppy's breath of bitterness, instead of a breathing of odor, that poets of all periods have characterized it as "the gaudy poppy." They take no account of its silken brilliance, so freely bestowed upon the world, any more than we who are

of the world — and credit them with gifts of genius — absolve them from the high office of inspiration to noble living, or of interpretation of spiritual law. Shall these frail beauties be judged by our most exacting standards? I find that while I am dimly conscious of ideal heights of perfection, both in poets and flowers, I still give my poppies place. I do not gather them to keep me company in rainy house-hours, or offer them to ailing souls, or aching bodies, but I thank them for what they are, and leave them standing, while I gather things with souls.

Yet even while I speak of the poppy as a soulless blossom, I am fain to confess that in my memory there are more human associations with it



than with any other flower. I think of the roads which lead to Rome, along which they run in a wavering flame of scarlet, and of the grave of Keats, and of the precious dead of some of English race who sleep in Florence, — the very dust which clothed their souls sending up these flowers like bubbles of vitality.

Then I remember a garden in the little English village of Broadway, and a tall waving mass of magnificent flower heads, purple and cardinal, and a group of painters who spent holiday afternoons in the garden and tennis court, one after another tempted into painting the poppy garden. Abbey, and Millet, and Blashfield, and Sargent, and Parsons, each in turn seduced from illus-

tration or portraiture or studies from life, to the portrayal of the great waving flower heads in and among the shadows of green and glints of gold which streamed over the high roadside wall. All of these painters painted the poppies, and each one painted a different thing.

The picture evolved by Sargent was a complex mingling of life and light and color — a group of children and lanterns and planes of poppies all flashing together against the mystical half darkness of a summer twilight.

Another saw only mystery and glamour, and his picture was like the fire-tipped clouds of a late sunset; and another saw only gayety and brightness, and the sketch he made was like a group of girls dancing in

sunlight; but no one really painted the poppies.

I wondered then, as I wonder now, why each man's presentment was as different as if each had seen the subject in a dream, — a dream faintly suggested by the mass of swaying poppy heads which had caught them all in its beauty net.

But it told the story of the individuality of our eyes, and that each mortal, looking through the lens of his own individuality, may reckon upon a difference in construction which makes him see every existence in nature differently from his fellow. One child will see a wolf's head where a pillow lies crumpled in a sofa corner, and it is there with its long nose, and sharp ears, and

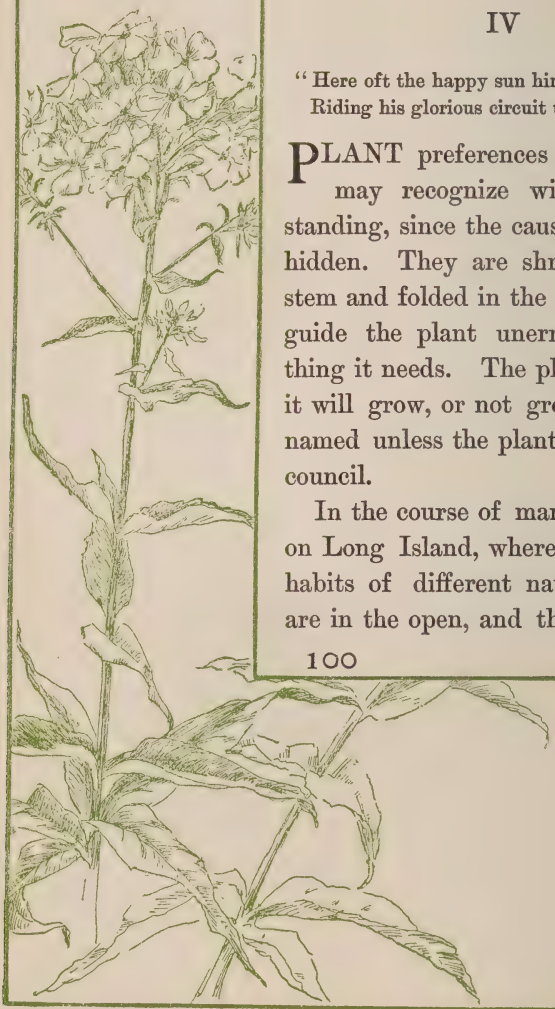
even its glowing eyes — and another child will see only the crumpled sofa pillow. It is the difference in the make of the eyes, as well as the point of view, and I have no doubt my painter friends saw exactly what they painted, and painted what they saw.

IV

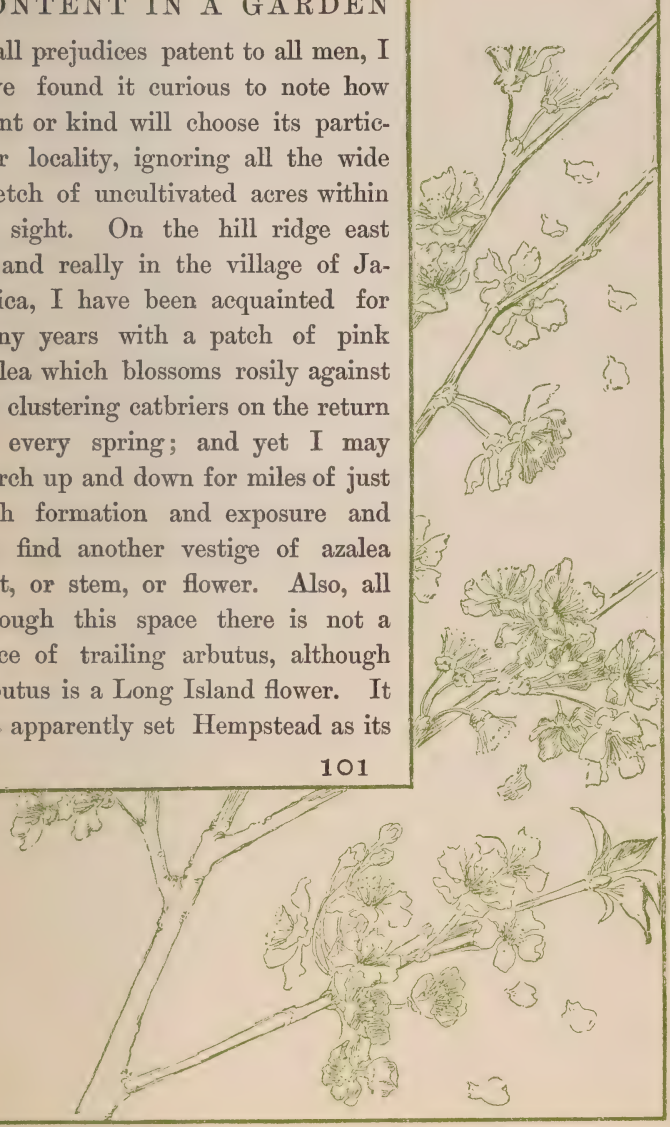
"Here oft the happy sun himself would rest,
Riding his glorious circuit to the west."

PLANT preferences are things we may recognize without understanding, since the causes are closely hidden. They are shrouded in the stem and folded in the bud, but they guide the plant unerringly to the thing it needs. The places in which it will grow, or not grow, cannot be named unless the plant is taken into council.

In the course of many years lived on Long Island, where the lives and habits of different natural growths are in the open, and their large and



small prejudices patent to all men, I have found it curious to note how plant or kind will choose its particular locality, ignoring all the wide stretch of uncultivated acres within its sight. On the hill ridge east of, and really in the village of Jamaica, I have been acquainted for many years with a patch of pink azalea which blossoms rosily against the clustering catbriers on the return of every spring; and yet I may search up and down for miles of just such formation and exposure and not find another vestige of azalea root, or stem, or flower. Also, all through this space there is not a trace of trailing arbutus, although arbutus is a Long Island flower. It has apparently set Hempstead as its



western limit, but it wanders east of that through woods and sheltered ground for miles.

In May you easily know, as you cross on the ferryboats to the city, in what part of the island the crowds of well-gowned and well-bred looking women have been staying, by the bunches of flowers they wear or bring. If in the neighborhood of Hempstead, they have not only hunted the fox but arbutus as well. If at Cold Spring Harbor, they will wear beautiful waxlike buds of laurel; if at Wave Crest or Rockaway, the flat, pinkish-blue crowfoot violet. We say such and such a thing grows in such and such a place, which means that — unconscious as we think it — it has con-

sidered and selected a place to live and grow in, which it prefers above all others. It is no haphazard selection, but founded upon something which is beyond us. Perhaps tradition and sentiment have to do with it, as well as warmth or shadow or exposure.

In one of the Long Island ponds known in Jamaica as "the one-mile mill-pond" grew a species of gigantic white water lily, the peer of which I have not found elsewhere, and which, as far as I know, grew in no other water spot on the island. There are hundreds of north-side ponds where lilies grow, but they are of another kind, unacknowledged kindred which these particular ones royally ignored. The moderate-sized flexible-stemmed

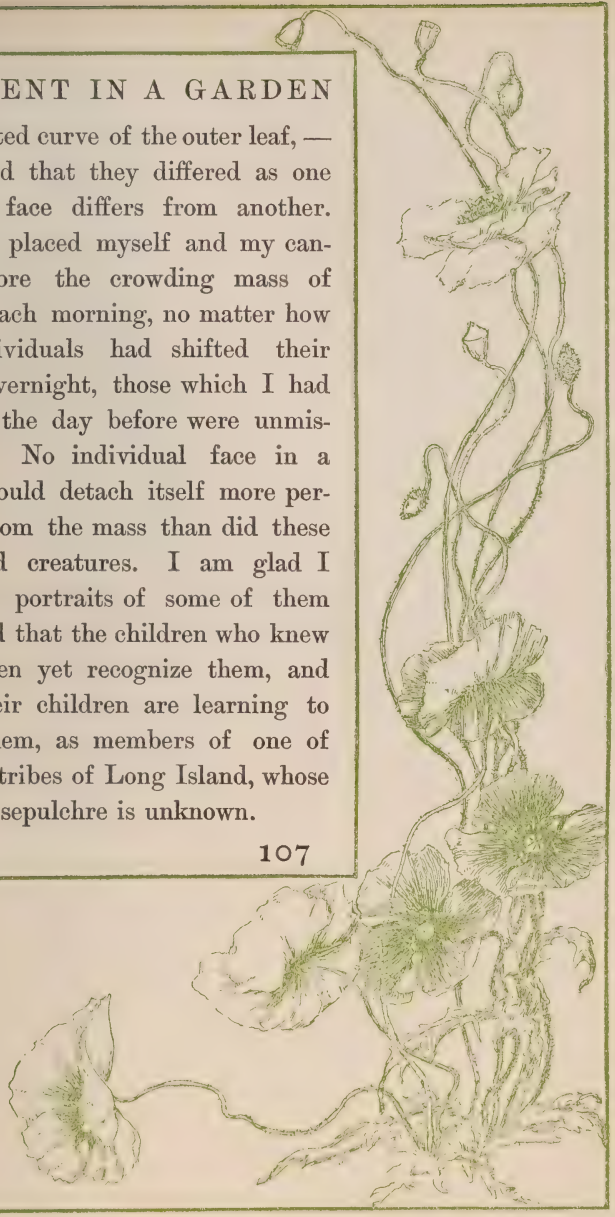
variety grows in still and shallow water nearly everywhere. This one grew upon a stem the size of a woman's finger, and held its head as proudly as a queen. The buds were from three to four inches in length, and the flowers often eight inches across. As the pond was the southern boundary of our homestead, the long tangle of woods between was traversed as often as once a week in the lily season to bring home these wonders of blossom; and a shallow tub of them made a small lily pond on the north piazza of "Nestledown." In those days the Bryant homestead at Roslyn was the living habitation of the living poet, and the drive across the Island, nearly from shore to shore, was an ideal summer afternoon per-

formance. Always when the lilies blossomed we carried a basket of them to Mr. Bryant, knowing right well that they would please a man who had given pleasure to the world. His love of flowers was a very lively sentiment, and few things grew on Long Island of which he was not aware. He inquired after these particular lilies like friends, and his acquaintance with and recognition of them was a source of added appreciation. To know that they commended themselves to one of the finer and higher intelligences of the world gave a crown to their beauty. There is now only a bed of white sand where they grew in the black ooze of the mill pond, all the water of it running in a narrow channel into the Brooklyn

water works; but the lilies which were planted in the minds of the children of the family in those days are living yet in the remembrance of the mature men and women they have become.

It was from those wonderful blossoms that I learned to know and value the *individuality* of flowers. Of course every one knows that one rose will differ from another in size and color, and one lily from another in fidelity to the type, but I painted the portraits of some of these Egyptian queens before I learned that one flower differed from another in expression. Studying them hour after hour with a painter's eye, copying the features in shape and shadow, from the golden central crown to the

pink-tinted curve of the outer leaf, — I learned that they differed as one human face differs from another. When I placed myself and my canvas before the crowding mass of bloom each morning, no matter how the individuals had shifted their places overnight, those which I had painted the day before were unmistakable. No individual face in a crowd could detach itself more perfectly from the mass than did these lily-faced creatures. I am glad I have the portraits of some of them still, and that the children who knew them then yet recognize them, and that their children are learning to know them, as members of one of the lost tribes of Long Island, whose place of sepulchre is unknown.



But there are flowers with even more individual expression than water lilies. Individual roses may be pensive and perky, dignified or hoidenish; and as for pansies, every one you pick shall have a different character. Some are perverse, like bashful babies, and will not look you in the face. Some are confiding; and some are even bold. Go and study them if you are an unbeliever, and you shall find that many things which we call human traits belong in almost equal proportion to plants and animals.

We are comparatively unlearned in the comfort and content of the garden if we suppose that it begins and ends with the delight of the eye. It is true that that is the thing which

first attracts us, the thing we are first aware of, but when we live in the garden we find ourselves constantly growing into a most subtle knowledge of the different ways of beauty. Behind the glamour of it there is a sense of personal acquaintance, a delicately familiar companionship, a differentiation of character as complete and — shall I say it? — far more satisfactory than in the world. It seems as if the cherubim with the flaming sword had been set at the gate of the garden to forever bar its entrance to the serpent, and forever protect its heavenly inhabitants from the world and worldliness.

I find the children of the garden more consistent in their behavior than the children of men; they have not

unlearned the great law of obedience. Each individual and family and tribe has its standard and rule of conduct and lives by it, and when we grow to recognize it in each and rest upon it, we have the peace which comes from our confidence in the behavior of a tried friend.

The depth of satisfaction to a dweller in the garden of content is this intimate knowledge of what lives behind the beauty. Emerson has said, "Everything must have its flower, or effort at the beautiful, coarser or finer *according to its nature;*" and this "according to its nature" is what we recognize in what we call the characteristics of the plant. Speculations upon these characteristics would, I fear, be of small

use to the professional gardener, but I find them of great service to me. Pursuing the speculations, I come upon bits of actual knowledge, morsels of fact which help me greatly in my main pursuit of gathering much and varied beauty, as well as all kinds of holy influences, into the one small space I call my garden. In pursuing facts, I am apt to drop again into speculations based upon them, so that the interweaving of fact and fancy does not seem to be altogether idle or unprofitable.

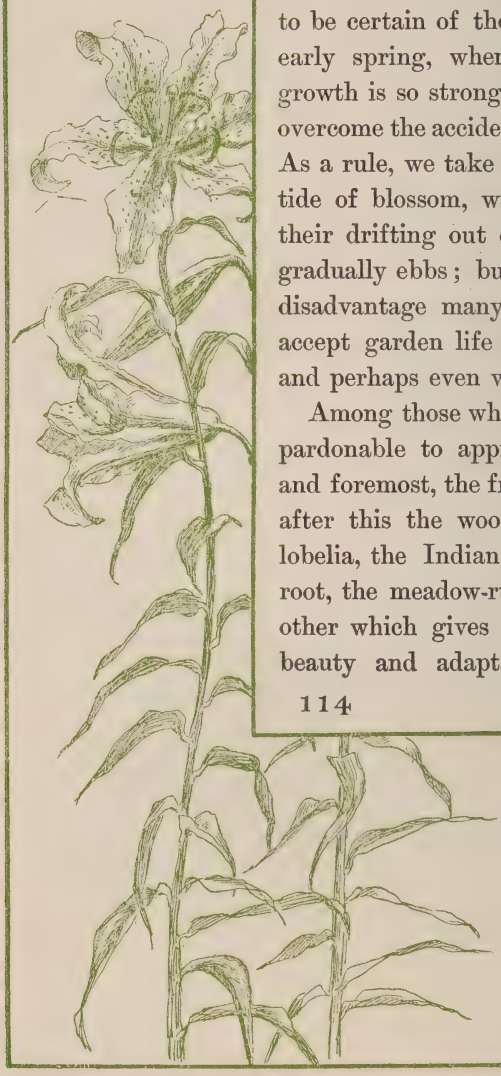
In the way of fact, I have found, or think I have found, that wild flowers are more ready to drop characteristic habits and take on new ones than are cultivated ones. Undoubtedly if one is wise and sym-

pathetic, he can do almost what he will in the way of adoption and training of wild flowers; yet in this delicate performance it is much wiser to follow than to lead.

Not every wild plant will accept transplantation with cheerfulness, but occasionally we find one which will suffer it and recover and thrive thereafter, as some brother and sister mortals reinstate themselves after apparently irremediable misfortune. To be successful we must know both the willing and unwilling varieties, and not persist in taking from the wilderness those which naturally shun civilization. Also, it seems to me that wherever Nature has sown liberally, so that we need only go into the woods and fields to gather her trea-

sures, there is no excuse for transplanting, and to do so is simply an evidence of a covetous nature, or a thoughtlessness almost equally culpable. It is only the wild things which grow sparsely and at far intervals, and so are difficult to find and freely to enjoy and admire, that we are justified in transplanting, and even in this we should be reasonably sure that we can offer better conditions to the plant than are already enjoyed, before we undertake to move it. The life or death of a member of a rare species is a matter of importance to the world as well as to the plant.

Wild flowers suffer from many disadvantages resulting from our imperfect acquaintance with them, and



from none more than our inability to be certain of their species in the early spring, when the impulse of growth is so strong within them as to overcome the accident of being moved. As a rule, we take them at the high tide of blossom, with the chance of their drifting out of existence as it gradually ebbs; but even under this disadvantage many wild things will accept garden life with tranquillity, and perhaps even with happiness.

Among those which it seems to me pardonable to appropriate are, first and foremost, the fringed orchid, and after this the wood lily, the scarlet lobelia, the Indian balm, the bloodroot, the meadow-rue, and many another which gives us warrant by its beauty and adaptability. I have

added all of these to my garden with great success and perfect apparent acquiescence on the part of the subjects.

Indian balm, for which there is certainly ample excuse for transplantation, will grow easily in any upland ground, although it prefers to stand where it can dip its feet in water. In spite of this preference, it will leave its meadow and river haunts and adapt itself graciously to the garden, its crimson blossom-heads growing larger and larger in the neighborhood of garden flowers.

I have planted the wild scarlet lobelia and this together, because the difference in the shade of the blossoms gives the effect which painters call vibration, relieving and intensi-

fying each other in color, and because the balm can furnish sweetness for both. Neither of these is a rare plant like the orchid, but they are apt to grow in wet places where one cannot easily get at them, and being exceedingly decorative in effect, are always a temptation.

The scarlet lobelia — *eyebright* as it is called by country children — is another of the wild flowers which one is peculiarly tempted to transplant, and it is not in the least reluctant; but to flower-lovers who get their lessons from companionship and not from books, it comes as an unpleasant surprise to find that this brilliant thing is biennial instead of perpetual, and will cease to be, when its second-year term of blossoming is over, as

promptly as if it had dropped into a well.

When a plant has been furnished with a root which can brave the cold of one winter, it seems like unwarranted and unreasonable following of periodic law that it shall live just two summers and no more, using the first for a trial of semi-perfect flowering, the second to show how well it has learned to do it, and then at once stop, and begin all over again from the very seed and go through the stages of infancy, youth, and perfect maturity, without the expectation of indefinitely prolonging its existence. If it could once forget to die, and we could enjoy it constantly instead of intermittently, what a precious possession it would become! And yet

perhaps even alternations of enjoyment have their value.

I have taken summer opportunity to study the foliage of the meadow-rue, so that I may search for and bring it into the garden in early spring. This columbine-leaved creature grows principally along the roadsides, and in late June and early July blossoms in a cloud of creamy, white-fringed bits of flowers. Placed among my pink peonies, which blossom in the mountains at that precise date, the great rose-colored flowers have the effect of being afloat in a foamy sea of infinitesimal blossom. It is these half accidental effects which make a garden so constant a surprise of beauty and keep the mind so centred upon its events.

CONTENT IN A GARDEN

The blood-root is not only the first sensation of the spring, but is one of the wild plants in which I find a disposition to respond to offered change, and to outgrow its traditions. In my Long Island garden there is a border where, many years ago, I planted the contents of a mossy hanging basket, — which had been filled with blue hepaticas, wind-flower, and blood-root. The hepatica and wind-flower have vanished, but in the earliest days of every succeeding spring the blood-root has filled the border with blossoms, growing constantly larger and larger until one might easily mistake it for some other species. But there is no mistake in the crimson drop which follows a breaking of the slender stem.

It is one of the most mysterious of plant mysteries that this spotless creature should climb into the world straight from a root, every cell of which is filled to the brim with blood-stain, — spreading its immaculate stars directly over the ensanguined root, and giving never a suggestion of it to the world.

If a child plucks the flower you will see the look of dismay with which he regards the colored drops upon his hand and his furtive effort at removal, finally dropping the flowers, as if the suggestion of hurt was too vivid for pleasure. There is a thought of tragedy about it which its heavenly purity is hardly able to overcome, and yet it manages to impress one with a sense of sanctity.

The wood lily, which is somewhat rarely found in the Catskills, can easily be moved even at full flower, since the bulb grows at no great depth among the tree roots. To find one of these red lilies holding up its crimson vase in the shadowy woods is a rare pleasure. If the bulb is a large one, it will carry two flowers upon a single stem; but I have not often found them with more than a single one, and, unlike the usual habit of lilies, this one is held upright, giving the plant the air of an Eastern woman with a water jar poised firmly upon her head. It is always a happy day with me when I find and carry one home to my garden. I feel like introducing it formally to its confrères as a visiting princess, and find-

ing it so gracious, I am not without hopes of finally establishing a colony of these oriental-looking queens, and giving them special place among the lilies. They are far finer in color and more distinguished in air and manner than the meadow lily, which indeed holds its curved bells too far apart to be really decorative.

There is a place in the garden, between the projecting south window of the studio and the two great lilac clumps which shade it, where I have planted as many specimens of the rare lavender-pink fringed orchid as I have been able to find in my drives or walks about Onteora. It would be difficult to tell exactly how and why this flower manages to convey such a sense of its own superior

value, of delicate and priceless worth; yet the fact remains that no flower in the garden inspires so proud a sense of possession. When I found the first ones in a far-off wet meadow, and brought them home and planted them here, there was a sense of surreptitiousness about the whole proceeding, like the hiding of jewels; and I am conscious of a certain furtive watchfulness in my tendance which the plants themselves do not seem to expect or require. In fact, it may be that a kind of lofty indifference added to quite perfect and peculiar beauty affects our estimation of their rank. They show an apparent carelessness as to what is done to or with them, that has an effect of the extreme of good breeding, and

certainly adds to, instead of taking from, an idea of their importance.

In a prolonged acquaintance with orchids, I have found that they are able to preserve this air of imperturbability in trying circumstances. Once, in the course of a day's journey through the mountains, I discovered a stalk in full flower on the roadside bank. My first impulse to secure the flower melted into a desire to obtain the root; to which end I unadvisedly accepted the offer of my driver to dig it, — with the result that halfway down, the slender root was cut clean across. I accepted it as it was, with as much grace as was possible under the circumstances, and as it lay across my lap, its perfect head on one side and maimed

feet on the other, I carried it the rest of the way with inward mourning. When I planted it behind the lilacs in the dusk of the evening, I am sure that I helped water it with tears; yet, when I went early the next morning in a mood of sorrowful acquiescence, lo! there it stood, absolutely smiling at the world and me. And it stands there still in the company of a dozen or more of its kind, — coming up every spring in a closed disk of leaves, much as a lily makes its first appearance in the world, and showing an entire lack of seasonable ambition of growth. It remains in a semi-closed case until July, when it begins to grow its tall flower stalks, and soon the delicately fringed and pinkish-lavender flowers

go feathering up and down the stem, lapping so closely one over the other that it becomes a solid spike of bloom, pervaded with an odor like that of violets. At this stage of its existence it is certainly justified in any amount of self-value, for nothing could be finer than its perfect and abundant elegance. In the world of blossom, it is undoubtedly what in the world of society we should consider a *personage*. The characteristics it most strongly expresses are dignity and reticence. It will grow in its own place with cheerful healthiness, but never a foot does it offer to its neighbor's door; indeed, it is a question whether its attitude of reserve toward the rest of the garden world is not in fact the most

positive form of disapproval. I have often recognized this trait in humanity, and even here in Onteora I could lay a sacrilegious hand upon a perfect human orchid, — while her human opposite, the cheerfully inquisitive campanula, lays a daily hand of friendly friendliness upon me.

I find that the reserve of which I am conscious in the character of this flower influences my manner of showing it to my friends. I care only that it should be seen by quiet people, or perhaps sad-hearted ones; only those who will not exclaim when I take them behind the screen of lilac bushes, but, saying no word of praise or enthusiasm, let these ladies of the wilderness praise themselves.

When I take a friend into a clois-

ter or a church, or even a private house of dignity and importance, I like to be sure that he or she will show only a respectful appreciation, and I have the same feeling for the orchid corner of my garden. In fact, I myself appreciate them so humanly that I do not wish to subject them to indiscriminate introduction.

There is a pure white twin sister of the fringed orchid standing quite alone in a wild garden at Onteora, — which I greatly covet. In all my siftings of wild growths I have never seen another, but I remember years ago, on Long Island, a group of salmon-colored ones which grew on an unfrequented edge of the one-mile mill-pond, and this tint, as every

flower hunter knows, is the rarest in nature. It is one of my unsatisfied longings to possess a hundred or more of these exceptional beings at once, but the seed is so infinitesimal that it seems impossible for it to hold the germ of life, a mere dust of vitality; and if one depends upon root propagations, — so far as my experience goes, — he will gain another stalk only at the rate of about one in three years. I am inclined to think that reluctance to multiply has something to do with the sense of value it inspires, and yet it appears to have a deeper or less apparent cause. In short, it is one of the mysteries of many-sided nature that a positive negative should impress us far more strongly than positive activity.

We all know people who say nothing, and yet whose silence influences us more than the speech of others; and this, I think, is the secret of my delicate, beautiful, undemonstrative orchid. It does not *do*, but it *is*, and its being is one of my sources of content.

Possibly it is these idle speculations which give me such interest in the vagaries of plants, — not of plant races but of individual ones. The things which independent specimens do with themselves fill me with delight. I am always wondering, not only how such individual manifestations will stand beside those that are purely human, but why one plant should get up and *do*, while the rest of its race plods along a

track which runs back to the beginning of the world.

There is a patch of blue campanula outside my garden wall, on a strip of debatable land between it and the woods. It began when I brought just a stalk and a thread of vegetable life from George Showers's farm dooryard, and planted it one summer day among the grass blades; now it has run wild, and in its flowering season makes the wood edge as blue as heaven. I have a great friendship for all varieties of this flower, from the one which clings to the rocks of mountain heights the world over, its delicate bells shaken by the winds of Alps and Andes and Colorado peaks, through the various half-domestic roadside species, which

vary, with their spikes of lavender-blue and bluish purple, the almost universal white of midsummer wild flowers. I like them, every one — until I come to a halt in front of something which I am sure man has evolved: the swollen beer-keg-looking Canterbury bell, with its sticky, insect-destroying leaves, and a stalk which is altogether uncertain of its natural direction. In this last development it has experimented beyond the limits of good taste, and I am sorry. It seems to me a wicked thing to tempt a flower into unnatural vagaries, — to make a Canterbury bell of a campanula. A development of body is certainly not as desirable as the growth of fascinating characteristics; and to encourage a flower

only in the direction of size is like establishing stature as the model and standard of excellence in the man. It is the something which means aspiration which should be encouraged.

The original roadside campanula is an inquisitive creature, often venturing where it is not bidden; and yet it is vastly like some unexacting friend, who is always ready to fill an unexpected vacancy. I have a theory, that — wisely guided — this amiable embodiment might give us a prolonged summer of blossom instead of its habitual wink of summer blue; and this theory is supported by the conduct of an individual one of my acquaintance, which has placed itself — so far as habit is concerned — in

an entirely new category, and has accomplished this apparent miracle quite without human or scientific assistance.

One September day, two seasons ago, I discovered, in a close corner between the stone foundation of the studio and the garden wall, a wild companula, stretching up a lengthy, wavy spike of blossom. It was long after its usual season of flowering, and, in fact, the campanulas at the edge of the forest had their seed cups already filled with well-browned grains, quite ready for scattering. I looked after this enterprising specimen with the attention we are apt to give to things which outrank their kind, since, in truth, a first-class plant will make itself noticeable in the gar-

den, as a first-class man or woman will be noticeable in the world.

The following spring I remembered and looked for it, and found a perfect mat of leaves where it had stood, with half a dozen children grouping themselves around the parent. When the regular flowering time came, I looked in vain for a rising blossom stalk, and was fain to believe that my exceptional plant would expend its vitality in leaf and offspring rather than in flower. In spite of the fact that its kindred outside had already blossomed and seeded and faded, still it made no sign; but when late August came it bestirred itself: a newer crown of bright and tender green formed in the centre of its leaves, and it began to lift its

head with a show of blossom buds; an example which the numerous baby crowns made haste to follow. It was mid-September before the stalk had reached the height at which it thought proper to hang out its pinky-blue flower bells, and then it was a giant of its kind, surrounded by a crowd of less aspiring but imitative kindred. Through September and into early October branching stems from the main stalk shook their superior five-pointed bells in air, and when the first black frost was imminent I gathered them and set their feet in a water-jar, where they went on growing and unfolding in the high English window until October was nearly ended. Now that variation from its kind has established itself

as a September blossom. I have set its younglings all along the studio wall, and it keeps step with the rose-colored wave of phlox blossoms which covers the garden when the flower season nears its end. I have acquired a new variety by what thoughtless minds might call accident, but a liberal or thoughtful one could see that it was by deliberate action on the part of the flower. It was an ambitious development, an aspiration of an individual plant which felt within itself a strength for unusual growth, and selected its own time in which to perfect it.

Florists have a habit of taking advantage of any such manifestation of power or ambition in an individual, leading it on by cunning means of

food or temperature, or perhaps even of superior companionship, until it has reached its utmost limit of development, and then by constant care, season after season, encouraging it to continued exertion, until, in scientific language, *the type is fixed*, and a permanent instead of a transitory wonder enriches the world.

We can see this result is not altogether one of science or skill. The horticulturist must have his happy accident to begin with; in other words, the plant must have first decided to differ from its kind, — to exceed by one supreme effort what its family has done, — to claim, and use, and make advantages for itself. The self-made man repeats the same kind of effort in the kingdom of

man, and it requires no more of him in growing-force than it does of the plant; but he, poor inadequate human being, has not been able to fix his type and make his race permanent. What a thing it would be if the type of what we call genius could be *fixed!* if the seed could be gathered and sown and the crop of it reaped, if every kind of man produced after his own kind as infallibly as grasses or daisies or clover will do!

Perhaps we are still rudimentary, and that when the world is older, man will have perpetuated certain superior qualities which are now alighting here and there upon individuals; so that they will become true characteristics, into which men will grow, as infallibly as roses and

lilies and violets do into the variation assigned to them. In the long future of humanity, a man may be known by his type; and his type may represent qualities. He may be known as a *Bravery*, or a *Generosity*, or some other great and good thing, and we shall name races or strains as we now name individuals, — as poets, or inventors, or explorers, or astronomers, or any other effort above the one of mere existence.

It is curious that while universities have produced an occasional wonderful specimen of manhood, they have not been so successful in developing the man-strain and leading it far in advance of common lines of humanity, as the experimental sta-

tions of agriculture, or of horse and cattle breeding have been, in dealing with their particular material. If a strain of man could be developed by university culture, and fixed in possession of all those qualities which are the test of human superiority, we should have breeds as distinguished in the man race as the "Lilium auratum" among lilies, or the "golden splendor" among chrysanthemums, and such races would be royal lines called by kingly names.

Finally, the world might breed a race of men whose souls burned within them for love, and with power to help humanity, so that no other seed would be sown, and it would become, indeed, God's garden, in which He might walk with gladness.

Transplanting is a pleasant excitement, and in some cases, an easy method of adding to the riches of a garden, but it must be remembered that it can never be successfully accomplished without concurrence of the plant. This may be more or less complete, and the experiment, consequently, more or less successful, but in this, as in all arbitrary action of the powerful, we take the responsibility of cheerful acquiescence or fatal dissent of the subject. We can realize that the forcible division of a plant and the removal from its chosen place, is not a pleasant sensation; but the law which governs its dispersement is as immutable as that the world must be peopled through the anguish of birth. No garden

can be made without it. The process has been going on from Eden until now. One can fancy poor young Eve lingering in her beloved Eden and digging up a root of some flower-friend, that she might not be utterly bereft of Eden when driven into the wilderness of the outer world! Poor little mother! Let us hope she found some of her dear familiar families growing in the wilderness, and gathered them together and made herself a garden, such a one as any Eve might plant outside of Paradise, — and that she found within it solace and comfort, when Cain developed the un-Paradisaic qualities of jealousy and cruelty. Even to this far-off day, there is refuge from the warring voices of the

world in a garden where no inmate is jealous of another, or fights for its foot of soil; we may create our own Eden, and the tree of life will grow therein.

I have spoken of the apparent willingness of garden things to be meddled with by some persons, while they are very impatient of the same treatment from others. There is in certain individuals an instinctive knowledge of the likings and needs of a plant, which will go far toward reconciling it to apparently rough handling.

Because I am not always on the heights in the true transplanting season of early spring, I have sometimes done things in the way of August transplantation which I con-

sidered hazardous and possibly unkind; yet, on the whole, my experience of radical work at that time is favorable.

When a plant has finished its supreme effort of flowering, it is comparatively indifferent to being moved. If there is a well-established mat of roots, and the ground which is to receive them is made loose and inviting, they will soon settle into it and begin to throw out new rootlets, which become well established in their turn before the winter season. And this, it seems to me, gives summer planting an advantage over the fall, because at that time roots which have not really snuggled closely into their nests cannot be well prepared for winter.

It is a great part of the busy pleasure of the garden to find one's self successful in all the changes and arrangements that are continually suggesting themselves to the garden-lover, so that while the sight of its beauty is enriching the days, there is also the pleasant labor of preparing for a larger amount of future splendor. In August I transplant my lilies and enjoy by anticipation their greater area of blossom during the succeeding summer.

I find the tuberous-rooted lilies much more tenacious of life than those which spring from bulbs ; and yet it is not a perfectly simple matter to dissect and transplant the five-fingered roots. A single bulb can be taken up even at inopportune seasons,

provided it is after flowering; and if it is not convenient to replace it in the ground, it will lie contentedly in a corner of your traveling trunk or wherever you may place it for the time, and months afterward, when it is planted in some far-off place, it will grow with as much vigor as if it had never been transplanted. But the tuber, which would soon lose its vitality if withered, may lie in the compost heap or by the roadside for months, keeping all the while a cheerful purpose of making leaves and flowers when a favorable time has come. The day-lily tribe will stand much ill usage of a certain kind, but they are not so long-suffering as are their bulb-rooted kindred. Yet, whatever its method of growth, or

wherever it belongs, in mountain, meadow, or valley, I am in love with the whole race, — from the wood lily, which burns like a lamp in the shadows of the hill forest, through all its bulbed kindred, native and foreign, and nearly through all its connections in the shape of the tuberous-rooted day lilies. There are, at most, but one or two exceptions to my passion for the race.

It seems discourteous to mention their names, but I suppose when one indulges in garden talk he may speak of his indifferences as well as his loves, and one of my indifferences is the orange day lily. To be a lily and have no fragrance is surely unfortunate enough, but to be also "sad" in color and to live but a day

is being doubly unfortunate. Yet, in spite of comparative unloveliness, this affectionate variety clings to its neighborhood to man with far more tenacity than the fragrant white day lily, which shares its briefness of blossom, — or the lemon lily, which extends its period of bloom for twice twenty-four hours, and its heavenly fragrance far beyond the bounds of the garden. It will cling for years to the neighborhood of vanished farm-houses, or grow and blossom in any of the waste lands where it has chanced to be thrown.

Of course, in the transplanting of tuberous-rooted plants, like peonies, etc., each tuber can be divided from the rest, as you divide the bulbs of the narcissus and daffodil, and each

one will grow an independent plant, but it will not immediately flower, as will the bulb. It must take time to gather another circle of roots before it throws up its flower stalks.

There has been a great revival of late years of old-fashioned flowers, so that old-fashioned people find once more the friends of their youth blossoming beside the lengthened pathway, and this renewal of friendship is very welcome, in spite of the development of many new flowers. We owe to florists, men whose business it is and whose very bread depends upon treating the money-spending public to new sensations, this constant widening of the flower horizon. Of course it is not every day that one can develop a new flower, but by

rummaging in old-time gardens in quiet, country villages one may come upon survivals which are almost new to the flower lovers of new generations.

Thus we have again our tall African marigolds, our sweet Williams and beds of phlox and lychnis, and live over again the days of our youth in their presence.

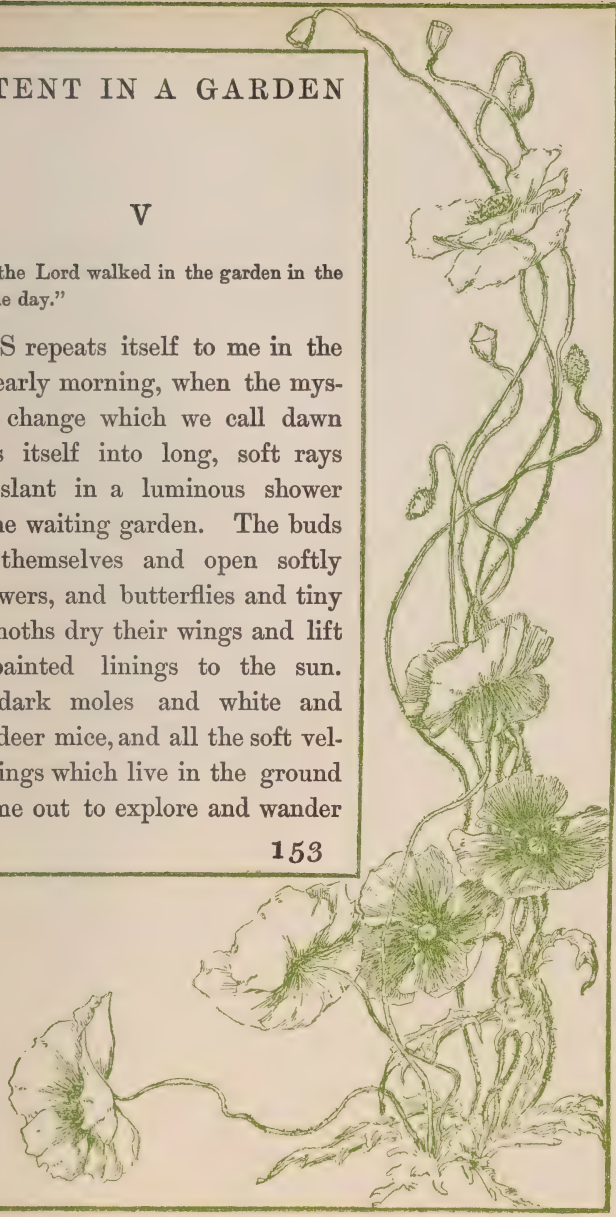
The best-beloved of our old-fashioned flowers go back to colonial days, and suggest pathetically the clinging affection which could transport so exacting a care as a flower root, or treasure amid the excitements and dangers of colonization the seed of home flowers. The hollyhocks and marigolds of our present gardens undoubtedly stretch an un-

broken chain of linked seeds back to the English gardens from which our Puritan foremothers parted in sorrow; and this thought makes them the more welcome and the dearer, aside from the inherent qualities, which would make them welcome.

V

"And the Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the day."

THIS repeats itself to me in the early morning, when the mysterious change which we call dawn resolves itself into long, soft rays which slant in a luminous shower upon the waiting garden. The buds shake themselves and open softly into flowers, and butterflies and tiny white moths dry their wings and lift their painted linings to the sun. Sleek dark moles and white and brown deer mice, and all the soft velvety things which live in the ground and come out to explore and wander



in the darkness, rustle back under cover of the ground. At that hour the air is clear and clean of daytime thoughts and pulsating with the gladness and exaltation of the new day, and over and over the words come to me, "The Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the day."

If one could stay at just that eminence of perfection in influence and surroundings, it would be better than Eden; it would be perpetual heaven. Perhaps the story of Eden is the story of the morning of the world. In later hours comes the tempter; but in early ones, when lilies are standing like angels in white and shining raiment along the garden walks, evil has no existence. It is then that the heart of Nature speaks

to the heart of man, and he hears it. Her glory is before his eyes, and he sees it. Goodness and Happiness creep through his veins, and Content broods largely over him.

In the early morning I sit beside the very tops of the fir trees' spires, where they grow across the height of the upper piazza. They grow visibly, lengthening hour by hour the blue-green fingers which are always reaching, reaching toward the sky. Underneath lies the garden, palpitating with color and fragrance. If my neighbor, George Showers, passes outside the garden wall, and I call a good-morning to him, he answers back that "it's fine growing weather," and the fir spires nod affirmatively. The great white clouds, sailing in the heavenly

blue, seem to drop lower, that they may share the day and the garden with me; and my senses grow finer and keener in the beauty bath of the hour, until I feel the minutes drifting by, — each one a rounded drop of pure enjoyment. Such hours and days come to us when we stand face to face with perfect beauty.

Of all the flowers that live and blossom, none are so in keeping with the elemental sweetness of the hour as the ascension lilies. Their glad perfection gives one almost the sense of an accident, a pure happening of nature. It seems impossible for anything deliberately to rise and grow to such a standard. My garden is populous with these perfected beings, for which I am humbly and

proudly grateful. As the season of blossoming comes, I find my very blood tingling with an enthusiasm of expectation. They have been growing long enough where they stand to have widened into groups which represent families; and consequently send their stalks in air in company, ten or twelve of them together. I am richer by this in quantity of beauty, and have more for the giving; but nothing can increase the wonder I feel at one single stalk, rising in stately superiority from its green-wreathed place through all the days in which it steadily aspires, and finally, pausing in air, makes ready to spread its splendor. When the buds have gathered their tribute of whiteness from the sun rays, and

drawn to themselves the odorous strength which is the mystery of their lives, the miracle of predestined beauty is accomplished, and one after another they open to the world. As I watch them, I feel myself wondering what commerce of feeling exists between the bulb hidden in the soil and the head in the air. What commands and requirements from above drop in fine pulsations down the stem and beneath the wreath of satiny leaves upon the ground? What is there that the air and the sun and the dew cannot furnish, for which the great mother bulb sends out exploring rootlets into the storehouse of the mould, — and having found, sends back by viewless messengers laden and overladen with the

elements of beauty? It makes one almost long to be a clod, to be able to enter into this mysterious world of growth and being.

I find myself wondering toward what acme of perfection such a perfect thing can be growing. If progress is the law of creation, what will be the immortality of a lily? When it goes from substance into essence, — and from essence again into substance, — what will it become?

Does all vegetable life thrill finally upward into humanity? One can hardly help fancying that that is the final goal of the more demonstrative life of animals; and when friendly horses come straying from the pasture, and leaning from their shoulders over the garden bounds, talk to me

without words, I feel like saying to them, "I wonder when you will be a man?" And when the chipmunk which lives in the wall sits up and chatters at me, I say to him, "What an inquisitive little man you will be!"

I speculate as to the human character of the heavy woodchuck which lives under the studio and ventures out in the early morning, promenading slowly around the garden while I watch him from the upper piazza. He nips my phloxes here and there with so proprietary an air that I call him the Bank President.

But it is curious that when I speculate upon the far-off future embodiments of my flowers, I think of them as girl children, and merry or stately maids, or sweet and lovely matrons,

— never as men mortals; and I unconsciously find an explanation of the mysterious temperamental difference between men and women in their animal and vegetable preëmbodiments. The cool silence of the earth from which the plant grows and the tree lifts itself is in woman's more quiet nature, and the fierce ravage of animal instinct in man's; and Nature's way of blending their characteristics is in their attraction for each other. Finally, the human being finds in himself or herself something of the patience of vegetable growth, as well as the impatience of animal demand.

I speculate upon the long progress of life in each, beginning from the least and most undeveloped to the last and most perfect; thinking that

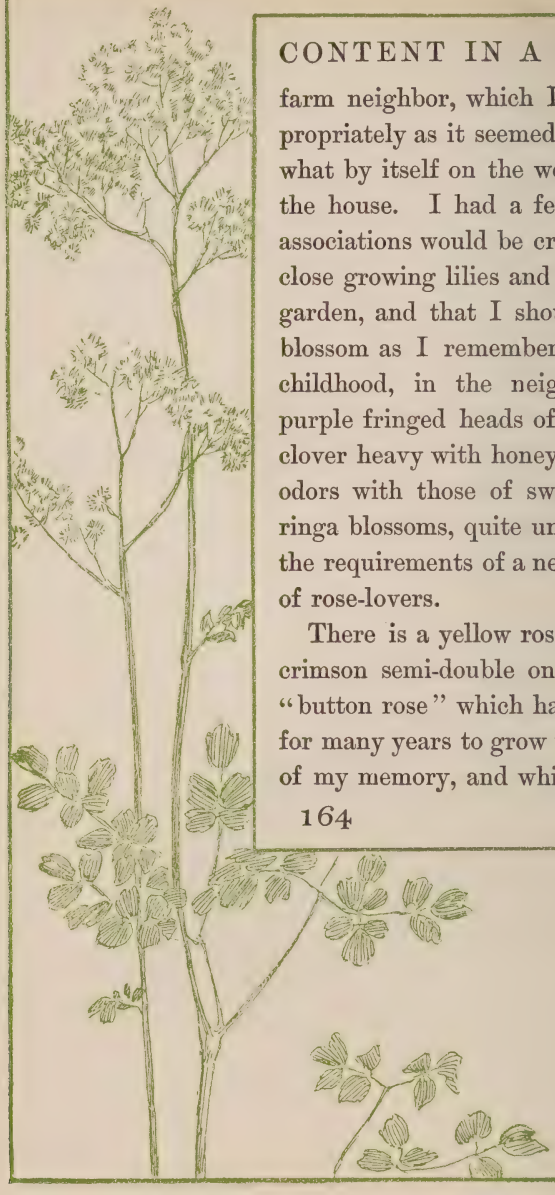
the mouse, with its little wants and small predatory instincts, might gather to itself, through a long upward progress, all the bulk and dignity of a horse; and a radish gain from gradual transformation and aspiring tendency all that culminates in the breadfruit palm.

Thinking of these things, I seem to see the whole of God's creation creeping, creeping up through infinite periods, through all the kingdoms of Nature, through man and his later and finer development, whatever it may be, until it wins its final throne and sits beside the source of life and power. As I sit under the fir trees in my garden, I wonder how much of the lily heart and the nasturtiums' spicy smart has been already absorbed

into the topmost spires of the balsams, and whether indeed it is not nearer heaven in quality as well as in altitude than it will be when it is merged into humanity.

But when I remember the inspired souls among men, who have sung great songs which ring forever in the hearts of all mankind, and done great deeds which have lifted the whole race to a higher plane, I see that the fir tree would still be climbing if it went through manhood on its course to God.

There are few roses in my garden of content; not a root or branching stem of the new beauties which have developed variety and difference by modern skill. I have an old-fashioned cinnamon rose, bestowed by a



farm neighbor, which I planted, appropriately as it seemed to me, somewhat by itself on the western side of the house. I had a feeling that its associations would be crowded by the close growing lilies and pinks of my garden, and that I should like it to blossom as I remembered it in my childhood, in the neighborhood of purple fringed heads of timothy and clover heavy with honey, braiding its odors with those of sweet white syringa blossoms, quite undisturbed by the requirements of a new generation of rose-lovers.

There is a yellow rose and a pale crimson semi-double one and a little "button rose" which have continued for many years to grow in the garden of my memory, and which I have re-

cently recovered in actual vegetable body from other farm-gardens than those of my youth; and these primitive ancestral roses keep their ancient charm for me in spite of modern miracles, also in spite of a garden of roses belonging to a family I love, to which I am yearly bidden as to a feast, — a garden where twenty-five hundred roses open their eyes and marshal their beauty and bestow their color and odor daily upon all comers. When I see this and think of my roseless garden I am not envious. I remember how my hardy darlings grow without tendance, or skilled labor, or tags to tell me their varieties; with no specifics against slugs, no drenchings from garden pumps, no anything but dew and sun and rain

and love and utter thankfulness; and I send an unvoiced blessing across the mountains in the midst of my enjoyment of my neighbors' untold riches of beauty. This privileged enjoyment of other people's garden-possessions greatly enlarges the happiness of the world. It is one direction in which man can give and receive with no sense of bestowal or obligation.

It is curious, when one comes to think of it, how large a space the rose idea occupies in the world. It has almost a monopoly of admiration. In love and literature, ancient and modern, it is a leading figure. A mysterious something in its nature, — an inner fascination, a subtle witchery, a hidden charm which it

has and other flowers have not, — ensnares and holds the love of the world.

Generation after generation, from Solomon's day to ours, has found no word so full of praise, so compact of ideas of sweetness and beauty, as the one which names this royal race. It almost seems that language would be poor without it, for no descriptive word comes more often to the lips. It has stood for a certain thrilling perfection since Eve found and named it in Eden. Poets have made it stand for perfection of beauty in womanhood, and it is hard to say that either rose or woman is flattered by the association, since it means that each is a crowned queen in her own kingdom.

CONTENT IN A GARDEN

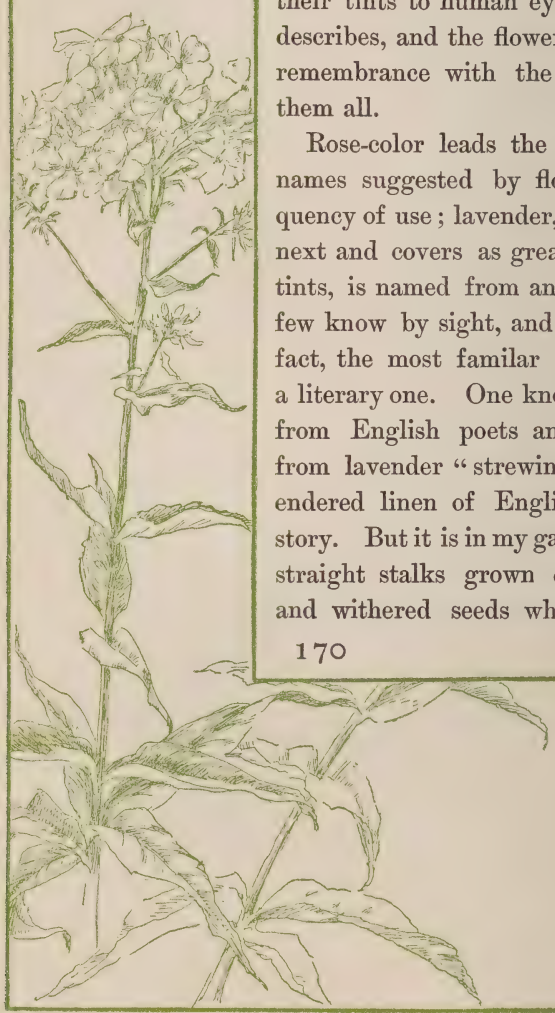
It is curious to note how much of love and appreciation certain flowers owe to certain poets. I have a friend who has made a "Shakespeare garden," in which nothing grows which the great magician has not noticed or praised. One may find there all of poor Ophelia's flowers and herbs, — things with beautiful names like rosemary and thyme and basil; but I am constrained to confess that they make far less show in the garden than is warranted by the impression they have made upon the mind.

There is surely many a daisy border which exists by virtue of the one "modest crimson-tippèd flower" which came to grief under the ploughshare of Robbie Burns. And how much of the love of succeeding generations

do daffodils and primroses owe to the loving verse of Herrick, — to the tender likening of them to "children young, speaking with tears before ye have a tongue." As for roses and lilies and violets, it seems to me a library of poems could be made which name or praise or liken them to human roses or lilies or violets. Indeed, in certain rare collections there is a book filled from cover to cover with tributes in all languages and from all periods to the rose. It is not the least of the tokens of the royalty and dominion of the rose, that the choicest of the sensations which we call color is called by its name. We use it to describe a sunset sky or the tinting of a baby's finger-tips; and even the innumerable variations of shades and

dyes of damasks and velvet and precious silken stuffs which commend their tints to human eyes, *rose-color* describes, and the flower mingles its remembrance with the loveliest of them all.

Rose-color leads the list of color names suggested by flowers in frequency of use; lavender, which comes next and covers as great a range of tints, is named from an herb which few know by sight, and of which, in fact, the most familar association is a literary one. One knows it chiefly from English poets and writers — from lavender "strewings" and lavendered linen of English song and story. But it is in my garden, its tall, straight stalks grown out of dried and withered seeds which came to



me in a letter from a woman whose face I have never seen. Violet and heliotrope are in the same range of tint that we call lavender, but we find their namesakes in every garden. We should have to invent new words for our color sensations, if we could not use the names of flowers and fruits. But, after all, how came their names? How came the word and the thing together ere they began their long travel down the ages? We may fancy that Eve — herself the first rose of womanhood — gave its name among the roses of Eden, and we like to think that as Adam "gave names to all cattle," Eve tried her syllables upon the flowers. Her joy in existence and love must have blossomed easily into

words as she emphasized one after another of them.

> "Was it love or praise,
> Speech half asleep, or song half awake?"

But there were many outside flower-sisters, straggling afar from the closed limits of Eden, who awaited their names until the world was peopled, and then found them by virtue of the associations they touched and the sensations they evoked. We can almost trace the state and doings of mankind in their names. The sunflower suggests sun-worship, and the iris smacks of Pagan days, and the fleur-de-lis of banners and royal pageants; marigold and lady's-slipper and jewel-weed came into speech after the vanities were born and well grown among the daughters of men,

but the lilies and roses and violets and daffodils of early English verse are inalienably ours, and belong to our race history, even although they might have begun in Eden, or at its very gates. Wake-robin, larkspur, and crowfoot, these smack of rustic observation and nature-love, of love of birds and living things. They have not been named from characteristics, but from form and likeness and faint suggestion. But it is not the same with herbs. Their names have grown from the needs and uses of men. Rue and sage, and summer savory! Human emotion and human wisdom, and human satisfaction are behind them all; boneset is physical healing, caraway is mental philosophy, balm is for blessing, and

pennyroyal is a lesson on the height possible to lowliness and poverty. And so through all the dear familiar names which come to us in long tradition, names given by rustic peoples who lived near the sod and whose experiences were of nature.

But among all names of all flowers, none ever appealed so surely to an experienced soul as heart's-ease. *Heart's-ease!* There is in it so profound a sense of world-sorrow, so tender an acceptance of comfort!

Some authoritative intelligence, whose elevation had not saved it from the common lot of suffering, found ministry in this small, cheerful, flowery demonstration of nature, and called it heart's-ease.

Or was it, perhaps, an inspiration

of some botanist, prone to sentiment, who took the purple of its superior leaves for mourning, and its gay yellow ones, marked like the whiskers of a mask, for a sign of cheerfulness? Whichever it may have been, it appeals to us by sound, as other flowers do by sight.

No wonder Lowell chose "Heart's-ease and Rue" to make the title and foretell the sunshine and shadow of one of his latest books of verses, and it was like his gentle-heartedness to write in one which he gave to a girl friend, —

"All heart's-ease be your days; no leaf of rue
Darken the nosegay Time shall cull for you!"

The clear, delicate, pointed handwriting almost shines to the eyes of the woman who was a little while

ago the girl for whom he wrote the inscription.

It is a high and awesome consciousness, that of holding in mortal hands the threads of a friendship which reach up to a soul set to shine in the mystery of heaven! But from flowers to stars, is the distance so great? If one stands beside them in the garden in the clear obscure of twilight, and watches the heavenly lights appearing faintly in the darkening sky, an inner feeling recognizes that they belong to the same world of influences, and that we are one with them both.

Dear Heart's-ease! one feels like exclaiming, beloved of heaven and of men for unseen ministry, growing freely wherever we invite and pre-

pare for you, whether in hearts or gardens, give us of your humble joy and power of consolation!

The scientific names of flowers are a painful necessity; common names represent their relation to humanity, Latin names only scientific facts. When some clever friend gives me the Latin name of a favorite of my garden, and it immediately drops through and out of my consciousness, I comfort myself by remembering that Charlotte Cushman once said, she could "only remember two Latin words, and those were *delirium tremens*." Nevertheless I feel a lurking consciousness that it is hardly respectable not to know the Latin names and remote ancestry of things which you live with, just as it argues

a certain culpable indifference to one's forbears — to those of our line who lived and loved and were responsible for our being — not to treasure their brief history and connection, and make a family catechism of their names for our children and our children's children.

I know a woman to whom herbs appeal even more than flowers, who has a garden of herbs. I can understand the interest she feels in adding year by year to a collection of plants which are preëminent for virtues instead of beauty. She has gathered a hundred varieties within its small limits, each with its own virtues and powers of healing. As I walked between them, and remembered the color and splendor of

my own garden, it seemed as if my thoughts were stepping from a Quaker meeting to a ballroom. The virtues dwelt with one, but magnificence reigned in the other.

Herbs which are potent to deliver from the tyranny of pain, and strong enough to command a nerve gone temporarily mad, are not to be undervalued even in the presence of beauty; and a collection of these vegetable potentialities is like a convocation of doctors, each one a mystery of knowledge and power. As a rule, they are not beautiful, unless one broadens his eyesight with magnifying glasses, and thus becomes aware of the perfectness of inconspicuous flowers.

I suppose some plants have a vo-

cation for helpfulness, and would rather be an herb than a flower; just as some sweet girl-flowers find in themselves a vocation for religious and charitable ministry, and prefer to become the thing which underlies that beautiful name — sister of charity — rather than to blossom into mere beauty. Yes, I can understand both the plant and the girl, and stand abashed in view of the absolute goodness of such longings; but the "delight of the eye" is a very potent joy, and carries such enticement with it that we are apt to forget the noble satisfaction of ministry.

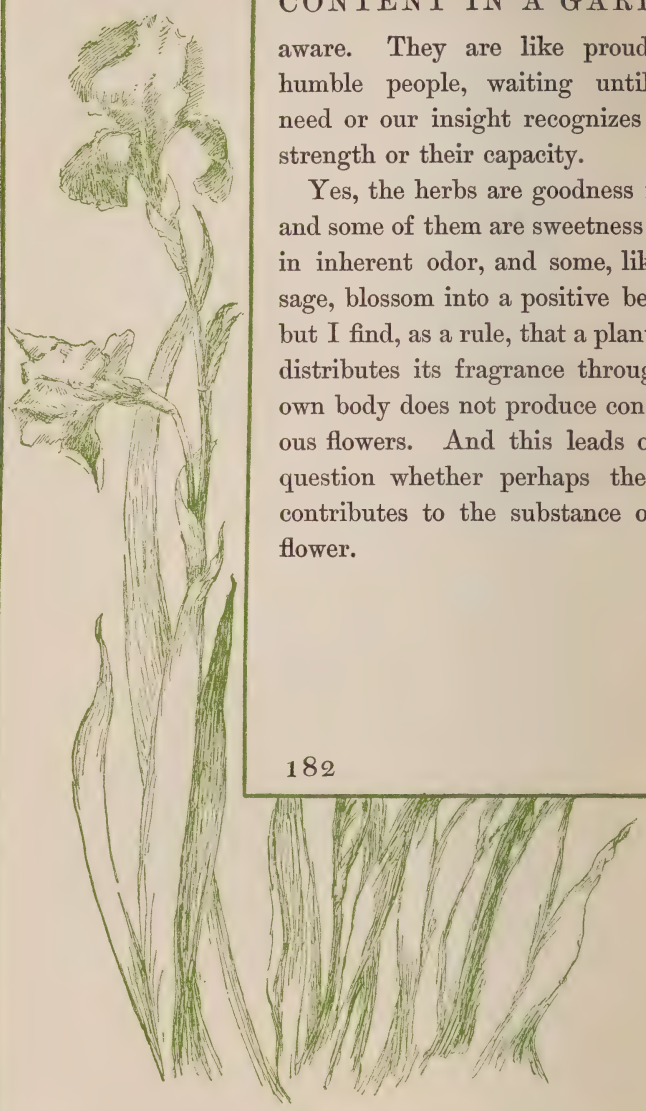
Yet there have been times in my life when I have been so overcome with pity for a wailing babe that I would have resolved myself willingly

into the fibre and substance of catnip, if with it I could have bestowed comfort and given relief. Poor babies! it is well there is catnip for their pain in the wide, strange world, and well for us that lilies and roses grow in it for our soul's aches and spiritual healing.

It is an old theory of the herb doctor that something grows in the world specially potent for each particular ailment or hurt, that every venom has its antidote and every wound its balsam; and so the herb-gatherers searched and tested and tried, hoping by some lucky befalling to find new cures for old maladies. But many a plant has kept its secret, and stands beside our pathways conscious of virtue of which we who need it are un-

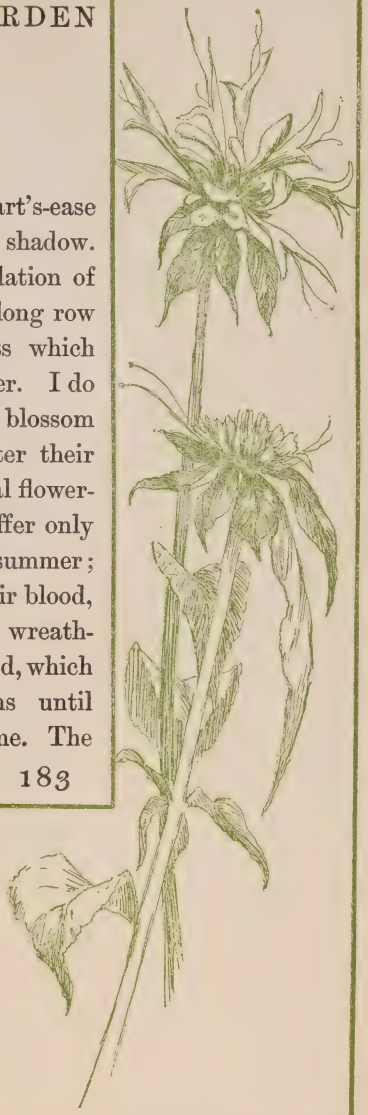
aware. They are like proud but humble people, waiting until our need or our insight recognizes their strength or their capacity.

Yes, the herbs are goodness itself, and some of them are sweetness itself in inherent odor, and some, like the sage, blossom into a positive beauty; but I find, as a rule, that a plant that distributes its fragrance through its own body does not produce conspicuous flowers. And this leads one to question whether perhaps the odor contributes to the substance of the flower.



VI

I HAVE learned that heart's-ease and violets do their best in shadow. Close under the stone foundation of the eastern piazza there is a long row of partially self-sown plants which blossom from April to October. I do not mean that the violets blossom during all this time, for after their spontaneous and even prodigal flowering in April and May they offer only an occasional blossom to the summer; but the pansies, sisters of their blood, continue to throw long, new, wreath-like branches along the ground, which give fresh velvety blossoms until after the first frosts have come. The



shadow of the wall is self-chosen by them, — a place where even grass grows reluctantly; and finding this so, I have sown new and large varieties in midsummer, which are already in blossom the next season when I come in late April from city to mountain. There is one variety which looks as if the leaves were cut from lavender-colored velvet; and in fact they are, from Nature's own manufactory of perfumed tissue, — the kind she weaves for the outer leaves of the fleur-de-lis and the pompons of the African marigold and many another flower in which she changes her ingrained silk to piled and shaven velvet.

There are no white or rose-colored velvets in nature, I notice, but pur-

ples and lavenders and golden browns in plenty, and something approaching that texture in the deepest crimson roses. If I take one of these crimsoned leaves and pass it lightly over my lips, I can distinctly feel the velvety texture. This texture, which is so apparent in the two deep-colored upper leaves of the natural pansy, changes to a smooth silken one in the lower and lighter-colored flower leaves. There are acres and acres of the wild parti-colored pansy in California meadows in March and April. I well remember the breadths of bloom which stretched themselves over the plains at this season, and the wonderful blue of the sky which seemed to rest its circular edge upon the farther stretches, and the birds

which sang between, dropping to their nests among the flowers in the intervals of song. I was conscious of a wagon-high, delicate wavering of fragrance in the air as we drove or walked along the road track, and an irresistible impulse to throw myself down upon the dainty flower coverlet in spite of possible lurking snakes or probable gophers. Bacon says, "That which above all yieldeth the sweetest smell in the air is the violet," and this half-sister shares in the precious endowment.

There are few things in my garden which must be replanted every succeeding summer. I have confined myself to those which are tenacious of life, which keep their hold upon it, and withstand not only the winter

cold but a degree of neglect. Phlox and columbine and larkspur and monkshood and snapdragon and many another belong to this category, and although introduced in the beginning and fostered for a while by love and care, will go on cheerfully blooming with no abatement of effort or beauty when love and care are wanting. Who has not seen these things springing through the sod which surrounds some abandoned farmhouse, and found a sort of spiritual tonic in their unaided lives?

Indeed, plants suit me better which answer to the class of people who require little from their friends, and who, above all, are not alienated by the preoccupation which life sometimes forces upon us. A certain in-

dependence and self-sufficiency is a comfortable quality in flowers, as in people. If either require too much of us, we are apt to wonder if it is worth while.

I think it is their placid acceptance of conditions which especially interests me in these hardy flowers, and this is, after all, only another of the characteristics which we find restful in our human friends.

To one who lives with and has perfect commerce with nature, the characters of the things which belong to the garden, or come and go in it by chance, are a source of constant delight. And these are not only or entirely vegetable, but very often human. I am tempted to ascribe far more individual action to flowers than

is generally conceded. We know, for instance, that voluntary growth belongs to all plant life. People say, "You cannot make such or such a plant grow here!" or, "I have planted this or that here or there many times, but have never succeeded in making it live." And that means that the creature absolutely refused to accept conditions ignorantly offered; conditions which a true gardener or plant-lover would have avoided by instinct, and not put the kindly thing to the pain of refusal. There might have been an individual or family prejudice which had not been consulted, and if it were a family prejudice, the gardener should have been aware of it. It is certain that whole species will refuse to be

colonized, although in the spot of their choice, — which by the way may differ very little, so far as our coarser senses are aware, from that which they refuse, — they will put an energy into their development which will shame the most ambitious among the sons of men.

There are as many delicate shades, as many subtle differences in the world of the garden as in the world outside, and it is here that close acquaintance and real intimacy brings its reward of interest and content. It may be positive and demonstrative character or the reverse, but as long as it is tenacious and peculiar it has the power which we find in the individuality of a friend.

We need not stop to prove this

fact of diverse character among our friends of the garden. It has been done for us by all who have written or spoken the world's thoughts from the beginning of the world. Have not poets forever prated of the *modest* violet and the *flaunting* poppy and the *shy* anemone? When I complained of the sprawling habit of my young apple-tree a friend said, "You can't find genuine fault with an apple-tree, it is so *respectable!*" And there it was, perfectly characterized. An apple-tree may be everything else in the way of beauty and beneficence, but it is above all respectable.

A thistle is a quarrelsome and fighting character. It will stand by the roadside and fight all comers, except the yellow bird, which perches

securely on its blossom-head and pecks at its crown ; and so will many another thorny creature, standing among plants or men, with "*Warning!*" written upon it from root to flower, or heel to head.

Herbs are stronger in characteristics than flowers, or is it that their want of the flowering habit leaves us more free to study and feel them? The glamour of beauty being wanting, we are more broadly aware of the things their very blood and substance express.

But some herbs show beauty. The Indian balm lifts a coroneted head of purest crimson, while it exhales from every pore its honeyed fragrance. Cowper classes the marigold among herbs, and yet it is want-

ing in the pervading odor, whether bitter or sweet, that grows in the root and stem and fibre, in the very blood, of most of our familiar herbs.

Herb fragrance has this difference from flower fragrance, that it holds and can impart it in such strength as to become a flavor. All children know the flavor of peppermint long and long before they know the plant, and men and women know it in the same way; indeed, it sometimes happens that they may never make acquaintance with the plant which furnishes the flavor. And they know wintergreen and sassafras and vanilla by taste, much better than by sight or smell.

The plant machinery by which fragrances are manufactured seems

to be managed by every vegetable family quite in its own way. In some it rises no higher than the root, as in the orris and calamus. In some it faintly pervades leaves and flowers as well, even whole trees; and this is true in a slight degree of birch and sassafras, and in a greater degree of sandalwood. In certain plants, most of which have inconspicuous flowers, every fibre and cell of construction is fully permeated and gives out odor. The family of herbs has each its individual essence, from sage to savory, and every bit of the dust of each will give an account of itself in fragrance.

All of the mints grow happily in my garden, while pennyroyal makes its home outside; but lavender and

lemon verbena are along the garden walks, and I offer them instead of flowers to undemonstrative friends — those who take their joys quietly.

"A garden of herbs" would be full of robust and serious-minded companionship — never lacking in strength or healing — yet wanting in the vague spiritual ministration which is a quality of fainter and more subtle emanations. Indeed, it seems to me that fragrance is precious in proportion as it is delicate and fine. What in all the world equals the fragrance of the grape blossom? Who has not wondered at and enjoyed its quivering faintness, rising up in minutest threads of odor, from unseen flowers, and floating in chastened sweetness along

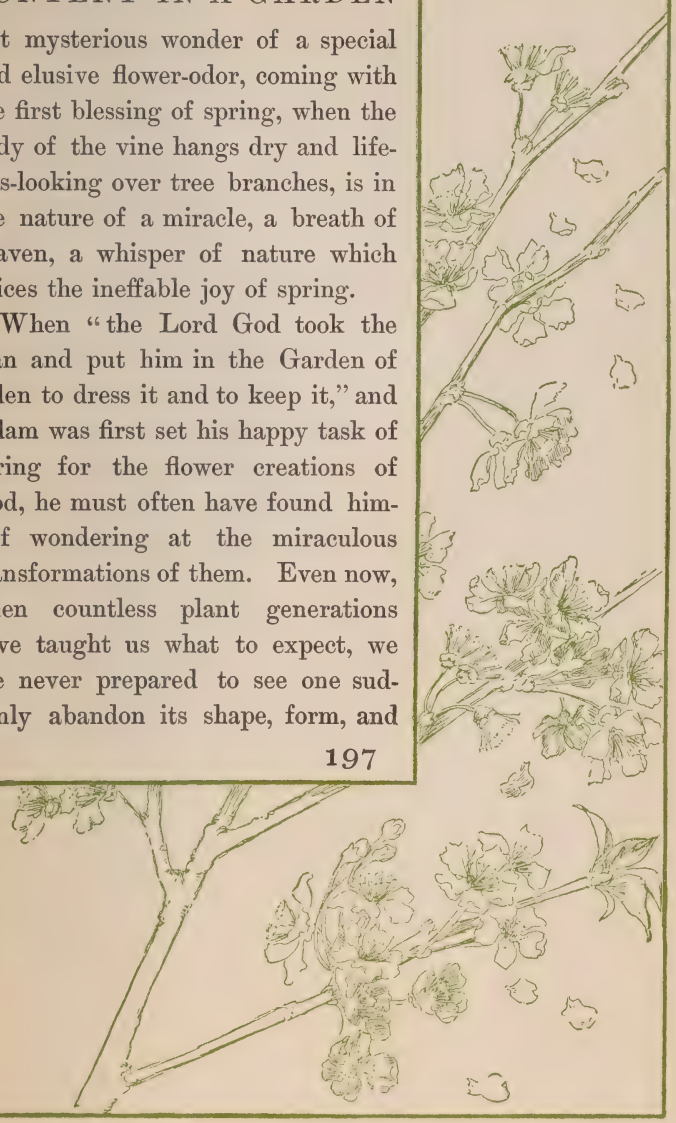
roads bordered with cedar and pine? As you walk or drive, you come into something which seems like the very air of heaven. Oh, what is it? what is it? your finer senses will cry, and all the time it is falling upon them like a benediction — an odor purged of earthliness — a something caught where birds find their song, far up in the blue.[1]

The grapevine has so many patent beauties and virtues, it is so much a synonym of generosity and joy and plentifulness, so illustrative of grace and sculptured beauty, that this

[1] Bacon, in his enumeration of fragrances, says: "Then the strawberry leaves dying, with a most excellent cordial smell; then *the flower of the vines*, it is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth."

last mysterious wonder of a special and elusive flower-odor, coming with the first blessing of spring, when the body of the vine hangs dry and lifeless-looking over tree branches, is in the nature of a miracle, a breath of heaven, a whisper of nature which voices the ineffable joy of spring.

When "the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it," and Adam was first set his happy task of caring for the flower creations of God, he must often have found himself wondering at the miraculous transformations of them. Even now, when countless plant generations have taught us what to expect, we are never prepared to see one suddenly abandon its shape, form, and



color, and blossom into an entirely new being, — a being made after some interior and peculiar thought of its own. It is as if it had desired to fashion for itself a crown and had succeeded, making it of its own special form, inherent of radiant color, and holding intoxicating perfume. At a certain stage in its life its whole economy or heavenly machinery of growth is shifted, or added to, so that while it may go on producing leaves and shoots, another set of forces within it, far finer and more subtle, works with an inconceivably higher ideal of production.

And there stands the plant! the same every-day green-stained diligent creature, crowned with the glory of its blossoms! It is the double na-

ture, the double possibility which surprises one, the contrast, or wide interval of intention. It is like a heavenly thought in the dull brain of earthliest humanity. I find myself watching my flowers as they appear, one after one upon the garden stage, with boundless wonder at this miracle which every separate one repeats, — until I sit down beside them in a land of transformations, as strange as any in the land of dreams.

During the winter days when my garden lies lonesome and shrouded with snow on the great white uplands, I remember not alone the sheets of color and the general beauty and brightness, but individual flowers walk in loveliness through my mind and seem to salute my senses

with their fragrance. A certain lavender-colored fleur-de-lis, with an odor of refined orange-blossom and a prodigality of wonderfully grained and textured flower-leaf, will often sweep all the intervening days aside, and rise up in my sight as fair a thing, as much a miracle of creation, as it was on the June morning when it first unfolded itself to my eyes. Also, my especial friends the lilies are memories by which I test the perfection of some human things and many that belong to the realm of art.

Seeing, then, that the garden is not a thing for summer hours only, but for winter ministrations and enjoyments, we should be glad to give, as proper wage for these blessings, as much study, as much effort to-

ward the perfection of its beauty, as to any other source of permanent happiness.

I find it matter for wonder that all human beings are not gardeners, and I try to imagine what the state of that man would be who should be born and bred, and grow old and die, among friends who live up to any possible ideal, who are never dull, never malicious, and who cherish within themselves possibilities of beauty which may any day surprise him with new joy. In the exuberance of my content I sometimes wonder if I should find as much in every garden; if, instead of this patch of exquisitely modulated color fixed like a jewel on the spreading bosom of nature, and where her lovely rai-

ment flows in folds of mountain and valley under my satisfied eyes, my garden were laid upon a plane of land where prostrate miles lay in infinite and indiscriminate succession over the visible earth, should I still seem to hold all nature in my heart, and be expanded and uplifted by its beauty, while I walked among my flowers?

I think the flowers would talk to me wherever they grew. Their separate and gathered perfections would fill me with joy, if the features of every blessed mountain were blotted out, and instead of their draped majesty there were only distance and sky. The flowers would still gather around me like a company of friends in whose being I could rejoice and be glad.

There is a possible Eden in every

garden, and yet how few of the children of men enter into and possess it! How few, even of the great of earth, know that it is quite within their power to recreate that lost paradise and live in its beauty every summer day of their lives! And it is not alone the beauty of it which ministers so potently to the soul of man. There is companionship to be found within it which never offends. Here we may select according to our finest preferences those with whom we shall dwell in our separate Edens, and they will remain with us, and bless us with their loyalty as well as their loveliness.

There are garden-days and house-days, as there are garden-hours and house-hours, days and hours when

one is shut within walls and must depend upon what of beauty one has been able to bring in and imprison; and it may happen, as I have sometimes known it, that one can arrange an interior scheme of flower color far more consecutive and perfect than has been possible in the garden, just as Mrs. Thaxter's flowers were far more beautiful in her house than in her garden.

And it is not alone in elaborate arrangements and chords of color that one can transfer beauty from garden to house, or from the wayside to the home. I have experienced almost as goodly a portion of enjoyment from the rainy-day companionship of two or three generous branches of the wild pink azalea set

in a blue-green Spanish jar against the faded blue of a window-curtain, as if the whole plantation were subject to my view. In most "flower decorations" — as one hears them called, it seems to be forgotten that there is a body of stem and branch and leaf, which belongs to every flower-face, and that these have much to do with its beauty and certainly with its character. In short, love and intimate acquaintance have much to do with flower-beauty, within as without the house; and the more of flower character one transfers to indoor companionship, so much the more does one profit by it.

I have noticed that when wild flowers are gathered and brought in and placed in jars of water, they will

either wither outright, or immediately set to work to adjust themselves according to their own liking. Every flower painter knows this, and will not begin a flower study until the group has *set;* that is, until each flower has chosen how it will stand. But if you handle your flowers separately, placing them one by one, and allowing them to turn to the right or the left, or to turn their backs or faces to you, as they prefer, you need not wait for this self-adjustment, — it is already done. It is the attempt of the flower to make itself at home in strange circumstances, to resume its natural poise and gracious ease; and if it cannot do this, it is quite ready to die.

It is hard to realize that there

are people in the world who are debarred of garden joy, — to whom the miracle of growth is unknown, and to whom the acquaintance of a lily and its delightful kindred is an unmissed delight.

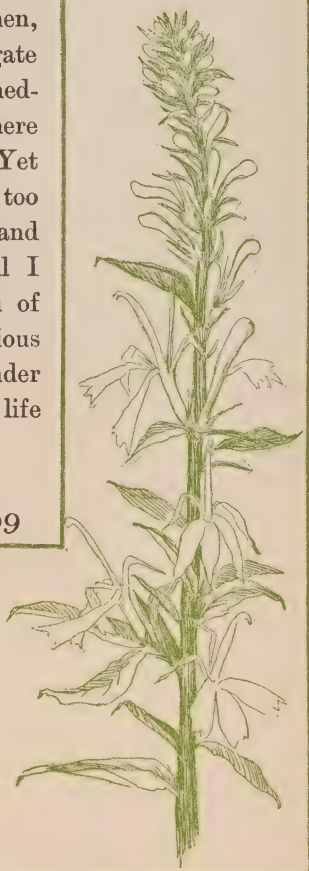
To sit with flowers in their garden homes at morning or at evening, and think their thoughts and enter into their lives, is as impossible to these defrauded beings as it would be to live neighbor to Shakespeare or Spencer and exchange morning and evening inspirations with them. It is a part of the comfort of the world that to these shut-out people, missionary flowers can go, not in tribes, but singly and by dozens, and standing in their sight teach them the gospel of enjoyment.

CONTENT IN A GARDEN

After the joy of the summer, there comes a certain pensiveness to the garden, which is midway between the high-water mark of midsummer joy and the ebb of melancholy. The ground is bare except for the glimmer of a few life-loving things, like the marigolds, which blossom with unabated vigor until late October—even on Onteora Mountain, where October frosts are keen and strong. I find them holding up flowers to the sun on mornings following nights which have blackened and withered their lusty leaves. There is no other living thing in the garden when such nights and mornings have passed, except the pansies which cower under the wall and hold their faces under their semi-evergreen leaves.

CONTENT IN A GARDEN

The young oak shoots which grew so purple and crimson outside the garden wall and along the wood paths, begin to grow russet with cold, and the late purple asters have given up even their downy seeds to the winds. Then, and not until then, it is time to chain the garden gate against straying cows and turned-out horses, and turn city-ward, where care and people await us. Yet many an hour at dead of night or too early morning, although cars and motors may roar without, shall I find myself again in my garden of content, and live over the precious hours of summer, when I sat under the balsam trees and felt that life was good.



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